Policy Alienation

Analyzing the experiences of public professionals with new policies

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Beleidsvervreemding

Een analyse van de ervaringen van publieke professionals met nieuw beleid

Thesis

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by

Lars Garrelt Tummers
Born at Veghel

ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

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PREFACE

In 1964, Robert Blauner wrote 'Alienation and Freedom'. One of the dimensions of alienation he distuingishes is 'meaninglessness'. You can feel meaningless when you do not experience a sense of purpose in your work. According to Blauner, work is more meaningful when you (a) work on a unique and individual product; (b) work on a larger part of the product; and (c) are responsible for a larger part of the production process. Viewed in this light, writing a PhD thesis is very meaningful. I worked on an unique product. I was responsible for a large part of the production process and the resulting product. In this sense, I can recommend writing a PhD thesis to you all as very meaningful.

On the other hand, I did often question the meaning of writing a PhD thesis. I wondered what the value of writing a PhD thesis is for society. How many people would really benefit from your work? When you read the prefaces of PhD theses, the authors often humbly state that many of their readers will only read that preface, and will not bother to take into account the contents of their work. I recently heard a story of a fresh PhD, who proudly presented her finished thesis to one of her colleagues, who thanked her and then put the book – without even peeking into in it – in her bookcase, next to several other unread PhD theses.

Some are satisfied with such a situation. However, I did not want this to happen. Maybe I am naïve, but I took some measures to try and prevent this. First, I chose to write a PhD thesis based on articles (also because I needed those adrenaline kicks of getting published, but that aside). In this way, parts of my PhD thesis were considered in depth by others than my supervisors. Furthermore, I wrote about policy alienation for a number of newspapers and national journals. I have also tried to make my PhD thesis easily digestible: every chapter can be read on its own. Moreover, I have prepared a short reading guideline, specified for different types of people. This comes next: you can decide which type of person you identify with the most, read the suggested chapters, and maybe be inspired to read more.

Who are you?	What should you read?
I am a public manager, policymaker, or professional who has to deal with new governmental policies	Chapter 1 (introduction), 10 (conclusion, including guidelines for practice) and Appendix 1 (especially designed for practitioners).
I am interested in change management	Chapter 6 (influence of policy alienation on resistance to change) and 7 (influence of policy content, organizational context, and personality context on resistance to change).
I am a sociologist interested in alienation	Chapter 1 (introduction), 2 (background on alienation), and 9 (relationship between work and policy alienation).
I am a public administration scholar interested in public management and/or policy implementation	Hey, you should read it all!
I am a very busy consultant	Appendix 1, which shows how you can use the policy alienation framework in practice.
I am a family member or friend with no interest in the subject at all	Just read the preface and show up at the party!
I cannot identify with one of the above	Chapter 1 gives a short overview, and this will help you chose parts that might be relevant.

For me, my work will become more meaningful as more people take it into account. But alongside this, the most meaningful experience during this journey has been to work with scholars, practitioners, clients, and others on the interesting subject of policy alienation. I am greatly indebted to many people and I would like to mention a few in particular.

My supervisors deserve the first thanks. Victor and Bram, thank you so much for providing me with the opportunity to start a PhD program. Victor, your expertise concerning policy processes and especially policy implementation gave me a solid foundation. On a personal level, I am grateful that you understood my feelings and aspirations in the work context. This was very helpful, especially when I decided to start working for PwC for four days a week. Bram, your knowledge of organizational sociology, and in particular alienation, was invaluable for this thesis. I admire the fact that you apply your own HRM expertise when working together. Among many things, you reminded me of the dangers of excessive work ('de menselijke maat'). Furthermore, you were there to thoroughly read all the pieces I wrote, and prevented me from acting too impulsively. Sandra, I am very happy that you have been the co-promotor of this thesis. Your desire to see solid research and quantitative measurement has significantly improved the thesis. Thank you for always being accessible and being involved, both professionally and personally.

Next to my supervisors, a warm word of thanks goes to the practitioners who provided me with the much-needed expertise concerning the policies and sectors which I studied. I would like to thank all the respondents I interviewed, those who participated in group discussions or presentations, and those who completed surveys. This totals over 2,500 public professionals, including insurance physicians, labor experts, secondary school teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and midwives. Without you, this thesis would not exist. I hope I have fully accounted for your experiences with governmental policies. I would also like to mention some public professionals who were particularly cooperative, as subject matter experts and in their roles as a chair or member of a professional association. Thank you René Baas, Rein Baneke, Jos Becker Hoff, Fred van Duijn, Martin Knoop, Sabina Ledda, Lucie Martijn, Peter Niesink, Wim Ruitenberg, Tim Ruitenga, and Ben Zwartjes.

I would also like to express my thanks to a number of scholars from various universities who were influential in my development as a researcher. They have also provided me with valuable feedback on my thesis, both concerning the content and the methodology. I especially want to thank Stephen Ackroyd, Laura den Dulk, Sandra Groeneveld, Peter Hupe, Walter Kickert, Eva Knies, Ben Kuipers, Rebecca Moody, Mirko Noordegraaf, Kim Putters, Brenda Vermeeren, Steven Van de Walle, Jeltje Wassenberg, and Bas de Wit. Furthermore, Giles Stacey deserves more than a mere thanks for editing this entire thesis. Next to being a very bright scholar and editor, his ironic comments on my English were amusing. In Chapter 7, I introduced an acronym POP (policy content, organizational context and personality characteristics) to categorize the possible causes of resistance to change. He commented: "Not sure why this suddenly appears here apart from the Dutch obsession with three letters acronyms!". Thank you Giles - the acronym is no longer there.

Furthermore, colleagues at PwC provided me with inspiration on what to include, thereby increasing its practical relevance. They also gave me the needed time to write this thesis. Furthermore, you broadened my vocabulary with words such as 'deliverables', 'tone at the top', 'fact-based', 'resource manager' and 'work-life choices'. I would especially like to thank Klaas Bochove, Evelien Cameron, Els van der Heijden, Charlotte Lampe, Léonie Langevoort, Dennis Muntslag, Eline Nap, Robbert-Jan Poerstamper, Jaco Rogier, Edwin Schippers, and Annelies Versteegden.

I would also like to express my thanks to some people who were close to me, on both a professional and personal level: Guido van Os and Niels Karsten. King G, we started our PhD theses together, in a tiny little room at Erasmus University. Although the lengths of our attention spans differed, we managed to get some real work done in there, in between watching The Office on youtube. I

also admire your taste in women: nothing beats a Research Master girl! Niels, I see you as a close friend and hope that we can drink a lot of champagne to celebrate life events over the coming years. Niels and Guido, I am honored that you want to be my paranymphes (paranimfen).

This preface would not be complete without mentioning my fraternity. To my knowledge, in its long history (established in 1946), only five 'Idunezen' have received a PhD. Maybe because, at every occasion, you should forcefully have to defend yourself as to why you are writing such a book, especially when it is about 'the government'. I am proud to be the sixth 'Idunees' to finish a PhD thesis and will carefully handle the 'Iduna Promotie Wisselbeker'.

My last words of thanks go to my family and Aline. Mom, Dad, you supported me in my development and you were always willing to provide the needed support and encouragement. Sven, Charlotte, Emma, Birgit, Thor, and Maxime, you all helped me with this thesis, from developing a website to moral support. Aline, I think you suffered the most from the fact that I was writing a PhD thesis and working as a consultant for PwC at the same time. It was a very intense period for both of us. You prevented me from becoming what you called a 'one-dimensional man'. I admire the way you combine work, family, friends, and me (I know I need a lot of your attention). I learn a lot from you and look forward to spending our lives together. You give meaning to my life. Thank you.

Lars Tummers
Utrecht
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INTRODUCING POLICY ALIENATION OF PUBLIC PROFESSIONALS

1.1 INTRODUCING THIS STUDY

In January 2008, the Dutch government introduced Diagnoses Related Groups in mental healthcare. This was part of a process to convert the Dutch healthcare system into one based on a regulated market. The system of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs, in Dutch Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, or DBCs) was developed as a means to determine the level of financial exchange for mental healthcare provision. The DRG policy differs significantly from the former method, in which each medical action resulted in a financial claim. The old system meant that the more sessions a professional caregiver (a psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychotherapist) had with a patient, the more recompense that could be claimed. This system was considered by some to be inefficient (Kimberly, De Pouvourville, & Thomas, 2009). The DRG policy changed the situation by stipulating a *standard* rate for each disorder, such as a mild depression. This was a major change, which was not welcomed by many professional caregivers. In one large-scale survey, about 90 per cent of these professionals wanted this policy abandoned, and some openly demonstrated against it (Palm, Leffers, Emons, Van Egmond, & Zeegers, 2008). The following two quotations from healthcare professionals are illustrative (drawn from open answers to a survey described in this study, see Chapter 5):

> *"Within the new healthcare system economic values are dominant. Too little attention is being paid to the content: professionals helping patients. The result is that professionals become more aware of the costs and revenues of their behavior. This comes at the expense of acting according to professional standards."*

> *"We experience the DRG policy as a disaster. I concentrate as much as possible on treating my own patients, in order to derive some satisfaction from my work."*

This example is not unique: public professionals often appear to have difficulties identifying with the policies they have to implement which, nowadays, often focus on efficiency and financial transparency (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak, Knijn, & Kremer, 2006; Freidson, 2001; White, 1996). This could be seen as an outcome of the influence of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991). Public professionals may have difficulty in accepting the changing trade-off in values which becomes manifest when implementing such a policy program. Here, Emery and Giauque (2003:475) note that "to focus on only the economic

logic of action poses problems for public agents. They have to set aside some other shared values in order to concentrate solely on 'measurement management'." These adopted output performance norms often conflict with traditional professional standards and/or with the demands of increasingly empowered clients. As a result, public professionals often seem to have problems identifying with the policies they have to implement.

Although these identification problems have been acknowledged by scholars (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May, 2003; B. G. Peters & Pierre, 1998), there is to date no coherent, theoretical framework for analyzing this topic. This study addresses this issue by building a theoretical 'policy alienation' framework, building on the concept of work alienation developed in the field of sociology of work and labor. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program to be implemented, by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients.

Studying the policy alienation of public professionals is not only of academic interest, it is also highly relevant for policymakers. Firstly, because, if implementers are unable to identify with a policy, this can negatively influence policy effectiveness and thereby organizational performance (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009). Secondly, a high level of policy alienation can also affect the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens, which may eventually influence the output legitimacy of government (Bekkers, Edwards, Fenger, & Dijkstra, 2007). A better understanding of policy alienation, its measurement, its influencing factors, and its effects is important for policymakers and managers if they want to develop policies which will be more readily accepted by implementing public professionals. In this study, we focus upon this new concept of 'policy alienation'.

However, before going into detail into the concept of policy alienation and its background, we must first explain that this study is presented in the form of a number of scholarly articles (see also Table 1.2). Five articles have been accepted for publication, in Public Management Review (PMR), International Journal of Public Administration (IJPA), the International Review of Administrative Sciences (IRAS), Public Administration Review (PAR), and Public Administration (PA). Further, Articles 6 and 7 have been presented at academic conferences and will be submitted to international journals. An advantage for readers is that all the chapters (except 1, 2 and 10) stand alone and can be read without needing to read the other chapters. However, a disadvantage is that there is some overlap between the chapters, for example in the introductions and in the value of the study, and the definition of policy alienation and its dimensions appears several times. I hope that you can

recognize the reasons for this if you should read the entire study. The main differences are in the research question the chapters aim to answer, the cases they analyze (four cases have been studied), the methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods are used) and the conclusions they draw based on the theory and empirical analyses. Further, they also draw on different literature streams, from, for example, public administration literature and change management (see Section 1.4). As some of these articles are multiple authored, and for consistency, I use the pronoun 'we' throughout the whole study. Further, the pronoun 'he' is often used, also when referrering to both genders. We have followed this practice to aid the flow of the study.

In this chapter, we first describe the background concerning the pressures that professionals face in contemporary society (Section 1.2). Next, we define the two concepts that are paramount for this study: policy alienation and public professionals. This is done in Section 1.3. We will then discuss the theoretical, methodological, and practical values of this study (Section 1.4). Section 1.5 discusses the research questions and the study outline. Finally, Section 1.6 will discuss our selection criteria for the four policies examined in this study. The final section summarizes this chapter and looks ahead to the next chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND: PUBLIC PROFESSIONALS PERCEIVED TO BE UNDER PRESSURE

Professionals and professionalism are important concepts in the public sector. In the first studies on professionals and professionalism, a functionalist perspective was used that originated from the works of Emile Durkheim (1957) (see also Van der Veen, forthcoming 2012). In this perspective, professionals are seen as the bearers of important social values. Professionals, such as medical specialists and notaries are seen as using their skills for the betterment of society. Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, professionals and professionalism became much more controversial. It was said that professionals were over-occupied with their self-interests, which had resulted in empire-building and protectionism of their professional status (Duyvendak et al., 2006). A prime example of this assault is Illich's 'Medical Nemesis. The Expropriation of Health' (see also Van der Veen, forthcoming 2012). Illich (1976:3) argues that the power of the medical profession is harmful to society: "The medical establishment has become a major threat to health. The disabling impact of professional control over medicine has reached the proportions of an epidemic."

However, in the present day, the balance seems to be shifting once again. This is illustrated by the fact that Freidson (2001) – once a leading critic of the power of professions - argues that the power of professions is diminishing

to a level that could have serious negative consequences both for professionals and for society (Duyvendak et al., 2006:8). Generally, it seems that an intense debate is ongoing concerning the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery. A number of scholarly articles have appeared on this topic (Ackroyd, Kirkpatrick, & Walker, 2007; Currie, Finn, & Martin, 2009; De Ruyter, Kirkpatrick, Hoque, Lonsdale, & Malan, 2008; Noordegraaf, 2007; Sehested, 2002; Thomas & Davies, 2005), several special issues, for example in Current Sociology and in Bestuurskunde (Current Sociology special edition edited by Muzio & Kirkpatrick, 2011; Bestuurskunde special edition edited by Van der Wal, Van Hout, Kwak, & Oude-Vrielink, 2007), books (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012; Van den Brink, Jansen, & Pessers, 2006), and numerous newspapers articles (Hemmer, 2007; Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005; NRC, 2003; NRC, 2007d; Volkskrant, 2005; Volkskrant, 2006).

Why is there such an intense debate on these public professionals? Many argue that, in the contemporary public sector, numerous forces contradict the ideals of professionalism, such as changes in the ways in which professionals are managed, the emancipation of clients, and changing political viewpoints (Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Putters, 2009:14). For instance, it is noted that, as a result of managerial pressures, professions have experienced a reduction in their autonomy and dominance (Evetts, 2003:369; Exworthy & Halford, 1998). Further, Conley (2002:728) examined the influence of New Public Management (NPM) restructuring in the UK's local government, which had focused especially on efficiency and enforcing stringent spending limits. He noted that "one result of continued pressure is that public services workers are 'voting with their feet'". In other words, they were leaving public organizations. Further, as a result of managerial pressures and emancipated clients, professions such as medicine are threatened with deprofessionalization (Harrison & Ahmad, 2000). However, these very same developments increase the demands on other groups, such as social work and nursing, for professionalization with clients and politicians urging evidence-based practice and a highly educated workforce (Noordegraaf, 2007). Overall, we can confidently conclude that numerous pressures do seem to be strongly affecting public professionals and professional work.

This study focuses on the *policy* pressures facing public professionals since many of the pressures on public professionals are related to the policies they have to implement (Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; Leicht & Fennell, 2001; Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012). As noted, many public professionals have difficulty identifying with the policy they have to implement. To understand this, we will use the concept of policy alienation.

1.3 DEFINING POLICY ALIENATION AND PUBLIC PROFESSIONALS

For an initial understanding of policy alienation, it needs to be explained how the concept of policy alienation is founded on the concept of work alienation that has been developed in the sociology of work and labor, and how this fits in the world of policy implementation. This is the subject of this section. Chapters 2 and 3 will provide a more detailed analysis of the background to the policy alienation concept.

Alienation broadly refers to a sense of social estrangement, an absence of social support or meaningful social connection. Its use in scientific literature can be traced directly to Hegel and Marx, who both saw capitalism as the main cause of alienation. Karl Marx (1961 [1844]) concentrated on objective work alienation: workers are alienated when they do not own the means of production or the resulting product. Sociologists, public administration scholars and other social scientists have since used the alienation concept in various studies, thereby building upon Marx. For instance, Pandey and Kingsley (2000) have shown that work alienation is a strong predictor of the degree of red tape that public employees experience (see also DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Pandey, 1995). However, these scholars differ in one important aspect from Marx. While Marx looked at objective work alienation, contemporary scholars examine *subjective* work alienation: alienation as perceived by the worker. For instance, Seeman (1959:784) notes that "I propose [...] to treat alienation from the personal standpoint of the actor – that is, alienation is here taken from the social-psychological point of view" (see also Hall, 1994; Kanungo, 1982).

Scholars have used the alienation term in various analyses, and a number of meanings have been attributed to the term (Kanungo, 1982:24). In an attempt to provide clarity, Seeman (1959) – in a landmark article - broke these meanings down into five alienation dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Given that there is no theoretical structure linking these five dimensions, and that the presence of all the dimensions is not required, scholars are effectively free to choose which dimensions best fit their research context (Rayce, Holstein, & Kreiner, 2008).

Many scholars have used such classifications to devise operational measures for alienation so that they can examine the concept in various settings. Rayce et al. (2008), when investigating adolescent alienation, used three of the five dimensions. Other researchers have used Seeman's classification to examine work alienation (such as Blauner, 1964). In this study, we will use Seeman's classification for examining the *policy* alienation concept.

How can the concept of alienation be linked to the world of policy implementation? Public policies refer to the binding allocation of values, for society as a whole, in a situation of structural scarcity due, for example, to a lack of financial or natural resources (Easton, 1965). As a result, trade-offs occur between these values, for example between efficiency and equity (Stone, 2003). This is why street-level bureaucrats have the freedom to make their own judgments about the appropriate trade-off between relevant values when they apply a policy to individual cases, for example when a police officer decides whether to impose an on-the-spot fine (Lipsky, 1980). However, when increasingly professionalized workers have to implement a policy, more trade-offs will occur. These public professionals, as members of professional communities or professional associations, have to deal with several professional norms and standards (Eraut, 1994). Today, it seems that many of these professionals have difficulties dealing with these different values, especially as they often have to implement policies which focus predominantly on economic values, such as efficiency and financial transparency. Related to this, they often feel that they have insufficient discretion to properly account for the various factors when applying policies in specific cases. As a result, these professionals might become alienated from the policy they have to implement. This corresponds with the literature on public management and the sociology of professions which notes that professionals have specific professional values (such as providing the best care possible and professional confidentiality), which are not always congruent with policy values or the values of clients (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; White, 1996). Furthermore, when public professionals have difficulty identifying with the policy they have to implement, this can negatively influence policy performance, given that committed implementers are considered crucial for good policy performance. This is highlighted extensively in the policy implementation literature (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; Hill & Hupe, 2009; May & Winter, 2009; W. Parsons, 1996). Given these considerations, it seems worthwhile to further investigate this alienation of public professionals from the policies they have to implement.

Policy alienation is seen as multidimensional, consisting of powerlessness and meaninglessness dimensions. Initially, role conflicts was included as the third dimension of policy alienation (see Chapter 3). However, this dimension was dropped in subsequent chapters based on both theoretical and empirical arguments (for a detailed discussion, see Chapters 6 and 10). In essence, powerlessness is a person's lack of control over events in their life. Meaninglessness, on the other hand, is the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contribution to a larger purpose. Professionals can feel

powerless while implementing a policy, for example if they have no influence over the type, quantity, or quality of sanctions and rewards they issue (Lipsky, 1980). Further, it is also evident that professionals can feel that implementing a policy is meaningless if, for example, it does not deliver any apparent beneficial outcomes for society (Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). In making the dimensions more specific to the situation under study, we distinguish between strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness, and between societal and client meaninglessness. The definitions of these dimensions are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Operationalization of the five dimensions of policy alienation

Dimension	*Definition*	*Examples of high scores*
Strategic powerlessness	The lack of perceived influence by professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as is captured in rules and regulations.	A professional feeling that the policy is drafted without the help of implementing professionals or professional associations.
Tactical powerlessness	The professionals' perceived lack of influence on decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within their own organization.	Professionals stating that the managers in the organization did not consult them or their colleagues when designing the implementation process for the policy.
Operational powerlessness	The perceived lack of freedom in making choices concerning the sort, quantity, and quality of sanctions and rewards on offer when implementing the policy.	Answering 'fully agree' to a survey question on whether the professional felt that their autonomy during the implementation process was lower than it should be.
Societal meaninglessness	The perception of professionals concerning the lack of value of the policy to socially relevant goals.	Stating in an interview that "I agree with the policy goal of enhancing transparency, but I do not see how this policy helps in achieving this goal."
Client meaninglessness	The professionals' perceptions of the lack of added value for their own clients in them implementing a policy.	A professional who argues that a particular policy seriously impinges on their clients' privacy.

As this study concerns the policy alienation of public professionals, we should discuss the defining characteristics of a public professional. However, distinguishing professions from non-professions has proven difficult. Until the end of the 1960s, scholars would try to list the defining characteristics of professions (for example Millerson, 1964; Parsons, 1964) or semi-professions (Etzioni, 1969). This proved unsuccessful for three reasons. First, there was no

agreement on what the characteristics of professions exactly were. Each list appeared to be based on the author's view of the most salient characteristics of professions (Eraut, 1994; Millerson, 1964). Second, several characteristics are culturally-specific, with greater significance in some countries than in others (Eraut, 1994). Third, many criticized the task of defining characteristics of professions, as it did not critically examine the 'official' views on professions (Abbott, 1988). Hence, it seems to be difficult to define exactly what distinguishes professions from non-professions. To connect with the scholarly and societal debates on professions, we therefore use a fairly general definition of professions offered by Gabe, Bury, and Elston (2004:163): "to describe an occupation as a 'profession' may be simply to identify it as a particular kind of occupation, typically one with high status and high rewards, requiring long formal training and delivering a personal service".

More specifically, we examine professionals who work in the public sector, which can be broadly defined as "those parts of the economy that are either in state ownership or under contract to the state, plus those parts that are regulated and/or subsidized in the public interest" (Flynn, 2007:2). We call these professionals 'public professionals' (see also Sehested, 2002). As a result of this fairly broad definition of the public sector, we term some professionals who work in semi-public sectors as 'public professionals'. For instance, in the healthcare setting, there is a mixing of public, private, and professional domains. In earlier times, these were independent, and had their own mechanisms and values. This is a quite different situation than, for instance, found with professionals in municipalities. However, we coin the term 'public professionals' for both groups as they work in a sector that is heavily regulated by the state and subsidized in the public interest. This is clearly different from, for instance, engineers in the private sector. Furthermore, we specifically examine public professionals who implement public policies and, during this implementation, directly interact with clients. Examples of such professionals are medical specialists, teachers, and police officers.

1.4 Theoretical, methodological, and practical value of this study

Having offered definitions of policy alienation and of public professionals, the next step is to state the relevance of studying the policy alienation of public professionals. This is structured in three parts: theoretical, methodological, and practical value.

However, before discussing the theoretical, methodological and practical values of this study, we should note that this study follows an interdisciplinary approach; drawing on different bodies of literature. We chose

an interdisciplinary approach as it suits the interdisciplinary nature of the subject being assessed: the experiences of public professionals with the policies they have to implement. We used insights from the following bodies of knowledge:

1. Public administration and public management (for example Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004)
2. Policy implementation (for example Hill & Hupe, 2009; Lipsky, 1980)
3. Work and organization sociology (for example Blauner, 1964; Marx, 1961 [1844])
4. Sociology of professions (for example Evetts, 2003; Freidson, 2001)
5. Change management (for example Judson, 1991; Lewin, 1951)
6. Work and organization psychology (for example Ajzen, 1991; Wanberg & Banas, 2000)
7. Human resource management (for example McGregor, 1960; Wagner III, 1994)

These bodies of literature are of course interconnected in numerous ways (Gray & Jenkins, 1995). For instance, the policy implementation and public administration/public management streams are linked as policy implementation occurs in and around public organizations (Allison, 1971; Bekkers, 2007).

Various chapters of this study give different emphasis to these bodies of knowledge. For example, Chapter 3 primarily draws on work and organization sociology and on public management literature. On the other hand, Chapter 7 draws primarily on literature concerning change management, work and organizational psychology, and policy implementation. Furthermore, the conclusions are linked to the different literature streams. In this way, our study provides insights for different bodies of literature. When discussing the value of the study in this chapter, we focus on the two bodies of literature which are paramount for this study: policy implementation literature and public management literature. In the subsequent chapters, the contributions of this study to the other bodies of literature are discussed in more detail.

1.4.1 Theoretical value: building a theory based on the experiences of public professionals with policies

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an intense debate on the correct understanding of the phenomenon of policy implementation (Rist, 1995) by leading authors such as Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) and Van Meter and Van Horn (1975). The early implementation scholars were particularly concerned with the relationship between policy formation and policy

implementation. This led to a debate between the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' perspectives on policy implementation (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002; Hill & Hupe, 2009). Based on these insights, more nuanced approaches were developed (for example Goggin, Bowman, Lester, & O'Toole, 1990; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993).

Although the top-down, the bottom-up, and the more recent perspectives differ in a number of important respects, they agree that identification or commitment by the implementer to a policy is a prerequisite for effective implementation. As Van Meter and Van Horn (1975:482) put it:

> *"Implementation may fail because implementers refuse to do what they are supposed to do. Dispositional conflicts occur because subordinates reject the goals of their superiors … for numerous reasons: they offend implementers' personal values or self-interest; or they alter features of the organization and its procedures that implementers desire to maintain."*

More recent policy implementation research continues to stress that implementers should be able to identify with the policy they implement (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009; B. G. Peters & Pierre, 1998). As Ewalt & Jennings (2004:453) noted, "It is clear from the literature there is much that members of an organization can do to stymie policy implementation."

The policy alienation framework developed here builds upon policy implementation research by emphasizing the crucial role of implementers in determining policy performance. It also adds to contemporary policy implementation research by framing the experiences that public professionals have with the policy they have to implement in a coherent framework. This is achieved through using literature reviews, document analyses, qualitative methods, and quantitative scale development to build a valid and reliable policy alienation framework. The building of such a framework is theoretically innovative in the sense that, although prominent policy implementation scholars have emphasized the crucial role of implementers identifying with the policy, few have developed and tested a framework for analyzing this topic (O'Toole, 2000). This is in line with arguments of Winter (2003b:221) who notes that "There is a need for more theory development and testing [in policy implementation research, LT], and the development of partial theories seems more promising than continuing the search for *the* general implementation theory or model". The concept of policy alienation provides a framework for examining the experiences of public professionals with a policy they have to

implement. This can be considered as a partial theory because it looks at a specific aspect of the policy implementation process.

Next to being relevant for policy implementation research, this study also has value for public management, and especially for research concerning the pressures public professionals nowadays face. By applying the policy alienation perspective, we can enhance understanding on how New Public Management (NPM) policies are experienced by professionals implementing policies. Ackroyd et al. (2007:9) note the dearth of systematic studies on the effects of NPM restructuring. In particular, there are few studies on the NPM experiences of street-level professionals. Using the policy alienation perspective, we can examine what really happens on 'the work floor'. More specifically, we examine influencing factors on and the effects of the degree of policy alienation. Although scholars such as Exworthy and Halford (1998; see also Noordegraaf, 2007) note that a number of factors create professional pressures, this has yet to be examined thoroughly on the level of actual implementation. We will analyze the influencing factors using two case studies, looking in detail at both the *context* (professional context, organizational context) and the *content* (policy goals, policy rules and regulations) of the policy. Following this, we will report on three studies we made to examine the effects of policy alienation of public professionals. In so doing, we study in detail the pressures public professionals experience when implementing public policies (measured using the policy alienation concept). After our theoretical and empirical analyses, we move on to develop an overall theoretical framework that focuses on policy alienation, its influencing factors, and its effects.

1.4.2 Methodological value: quantitatively examining the experiences of public professionals

A second value of this study lies in its quantitative approach, used especially in the second part of the study (Chapters 5-9). To date, most policy implementation studies have had a rather qualitative nature. Here, O'Toole (2000:269) notes that "the move to multivariate explanation and large numbers of cases exposes the [policy implementation, LT] specialty to new or renewed challenges, which have yet to be addressed fully." Furthermore, there is also an need to quantify the experiences of public professionals with NPM. To date, most studies on NPM and professionals have had a rather qualitative nature (examples are Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Thomas & Davies, 2005). One of the strengths of this qualitative approach is that it captures the plethora of reasons for increasingly problematic public professional employment such as the quality of line management. Quantitative research can help build on this through theory testing and statistical generalization.

Quantitatively analyzing important research questions - such as the relationship between discretion and NPM (Brodkin, 2007) - can yield new insights, thereby adding to the debate. Some valuable quantitative research on policy implementation (Cho, Kelleher, Wright, & Yackee, 2005; May & Winter, 2009; Riccucci, Meyers, Lurie, & Han, 2004) and public management (Christensen & Laegreid, 2008) has taken place. However, these studies often failed to use validated scales, although they did sometimes apply exploratory factor analyses and reliability techniques to test the quality of their scales. We will use scale development methods to construct validated scales for policy alienation. Furthermore, only such validated scales will be used in the three quantitative studies on which this study is largely based. This large-sample quantitative approach can achieve new insights concerning experiences at the 'street-level', where public professionals implement governmental policies.

1.4.3 Practical value: focusing on the practical usefulness of the policy alienation framework

The gap between research and practice in public administration, management, and policy implementation has been intensively debated (Egeberg, 1994; Graffy, 2008; O'Toole, 2000; O'Toole, 2004). Some scholars are quite critical about the applicability of public administration research to practice. For instance, Bogason and Brans (2008:92) comment, "The weak reception and application of public administration theory in practice suggests that the community of public administration academics may still be producing knowledge whose legitimacy and usefulness is questionable." On the other hand, scholars like Laurence O'Toole (2004:312) are more positive and nuanced concerning the theory-practice relationship: "Expecting some theory, any theory, to translate simply into a clear and uniform body of knowledge suitable for all such customers is to expect far too much. The theory–practice nexus is not a simple link in some translation belt from thought to action." Although he is not as pessimistic as some other scholars on the theory-practice relationship, he does acknowledge that the theory-practice relationship needs to be improved (O'Toole, 2000; O'Toole, 2004).

In this study, we will explicitly focus on connecting theory with practice. First, as outlined earlier, we develop a framework which will help in understanding why public professionals can or cannot identify with the policies they have to implement, including influencing factors (such as the professional context and the content of the policy) and the consequences (such as resistance to change and job dissatisfaction). The policy alienation framework could be a helpful analytical tool when examining the resistance or compliance of professionals toward new policies. Second, we develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure policy alienation, using scale development techniques

(DeVellis, 2003) (see Chapter 5). This accords with Pandey and Scott (2002) who note that measurement, through the careful development of concepts and measurement scales, can be very beneficial for public management practice (see also Perry, 1996). Practitioners, such as policymakers and professional associations, can use this policy alienation instrument to analyze the general level of alienation or identification of professionals with a new policy. More specifically, the instrument identifies those dimensions on which professionals have problems with a new policy, for instance that they feel that they have insufficient autonomy during policy implementation (high operational powerlessness) or that they cannot see the benefits for their own clients (high client meaninglessness). This could lead to the introduction of appropriate interventions to reduce the degree of policy alienation, thereby countering the problems professionals encounter in implementing a policy. In this way, the policy implementation process could be improved. In Chapter 10, conclusions from this study are derived and, for each conclusion, the practical implications are extensively described. Fourth, a step-by-step program to assist practitioners who want to employ the policy alienation framework to study the experiences of public professionals with a particular policy is developed (see Appendix 1).

1.5 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION AND STUDY OUTLINE

Based on the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions this study aims to achieve, we can define the research questions and the outline of this study. This study aims to answer the following main research question:

How can the policy alienation of public professionals be conceptualized and measured, and what are its influencing factors and effects?

The main research question breaks down into four research questions:

1. How to conceptualize the policy alienation of public professionals?
2. What are the main factors that influence policy alienation?
3. How can policy alienation be measured?
4. What are the main effects of policy alienation?

This study is constructed around the research questions to be answered. The structure is shown in Table 1.2 and, furthermore, Figure 1.1 gives a schematic overview of the study.

Table 1.2 Outline of the study based on research questions

Ch.	Title	RQ	Empirical work	Article
1	Introducing policy alienation of public professionals	Main	-	-
2	Historical background of the alienation concept	RQ 1	-	-
3	Development of the policy alienation framework: An exploratory study	RQ 1 & 2	Document analysis and qualitative case study concerning insurance physicians and labor experts implementing new work disability decree	1. Public Management Review (PMR)
4	Policy alienation: A comparative case study of insurance physicians and teachers	RQ 2	Document analysis and qualitative comparative case study on insurance physicians implementing new work disability decree and teachers implementing reform '2nd Phase model'	2. International Journal of Public Administration (IJPA)
5	Developing a measurement instrument of policy alienation	RQ 3	Survey of 478 psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists implementing new reimbursement policy (DRG)	3. Public Administration Review (PAR)
6	The influence of policy alienation on the willingness to implement public policies	RQ 4	Same as chapter 5	4. International Review of Administrative Sciences (IRAS)
7	Moving beyond the policy? Effects of policy content, context and personality characteristics on willingness to implement public policies	RQ 4	Survey of 1,317 psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists implementing new reimbursement policy (DRG)	5. Public Administration (PA)
8	Organizational politics, the policy implementation process and their effects on job satisfaction of professionals	RQ 4	Same as chapter 7	6. Presented at academic conference, to be submitted to international journal
9	Policy alienation and work alienation: Two worlds apart?	RQ 1 & 4	Survey of 790 midwives implementing structural ultrasound research (20-weeks ultrasound)	7. Presented at academic conference, to be submitted to international journal
10	Conclusion and discussion	Main	-	-

The first research question considers the *conceptualization* of policy alienation. In working toward this, we will first provide a historical analysis of the alienation concept. In this analysis, we will look at the use of the alienation concept by its founding fathers Hegel (2003 [1807]) and Marx (1961 [1844]), and its use by the 'Frankfurter Schule' (Fromm, 1991 [1955]; Marcuse, 1986 [1964]). Furthermore, we will examine the way in which features of the bureaucracy and policy processes can be linked to alienation. Chapter 2 will present this historical overview. Chapter 3 develops the policy alienation concept by looking at the more recent literature on alienation in the sociology of work and organization fields (Blauner, 1964; Sarros, Tanewski, Winter, Santora, & Densten, 2002; Seeman, 1983). That chapter also discusses literature from the public administration discipline (for example Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006; Lipsky, 1980; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004; Stone, 2003) in order to ground the policy alienation concept in the public administration discipline. Based on these analyses, we then conceptualize policy alienation.

The second research question considers *factors* that influence policy alienation. In answering this research question, we derive possible influential factors from literature on New Public Management (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004), ICT (Zuboff, 1988) and on the sociology of professions (Abbott, 1988; Eraut, 1994; Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007; T. Parsons, 1964). Two qualitative case studies will be used to identify the main factors influencing policy alienation. The first case study concerns the experiences of insurance physicians and labor experts with re-examining work-disabled people in the Dutch social security system ('WAO-herkeuringen') (Chapter 3). The second case study looks at the experiences of Dutch teachers with the 'Second Phase model' (Chapter 4). When analyzing these cases, we employ data triangulation (Yin, 2003) by including extensive document analysis, several interviews and group discussions, and finally a validity check by discussing the preliminary results with board members of the professional associations of labor experts, insurance physicians, and teachers.

The third research question concerns the development of a *measurement instrument* for policy alienation. We employ a quantitative study of 478 Dutch psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists implementing a new reimbursement policy (Diagnoses Related Groups, 'Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties'). Based on quantitative scale-development techniques (DeVellis, 2003; Hinkin, 1998) we develop an instrument to measure policy alienation. The development of the measurement instrument for policy alienation is discussed in Chapter 5.

The final research question addresses the *effects* of policy alienation. We will focus on three important effects: the willingness to implement a new

public policy (willingness/resistance to change); behavioral support for the policy; and the job satisfaction of the public professionals. Our expectation was that increased policy alienation would negatively influence all these indicators. To analyze this topic, we conducted extensive literature reviews covering the fields of change management, policy implementation, public management, and work and organizational psychology. Further, three large-scale quantitative studies were undertaken to assess the impact of policy alienation on these indicators. The relationship between policy alienation and willingness to implement policies is reported in Chapter 6, using a survey of 478 mental healthcare professionals implementing Diagnosis Related Groups. To assess whether the influence of policy alienation on the willingness to implement a new policy is indeed as influential as was suggested in Chapter 6, we also conduct an analysis including additional potentially influencing factors (organizational context and personality characteristics). This provides a broader picture that enhances our understanding of the attitudes of public professionals toward public policies. Here, a second large-scale survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals implementing Diagnosis Related Groups was carried out, and the analysis reported in Chapter 7. Further, we investigated whether this relationship held in a different context, using a survey of 780 midwives implementing the twenty-week ultrasound policy ('Structureel Echoscopisch Onderzoek', or '20-weken echo') (Chapter 9). Related to this, we will study the effect of policy alienation on behavioral support for the policy, using the case of midwives implementing the 20-weeks ultrasound. We also examine how the policy implementation process (using policy powerlessness as a measure) and political games in organizations influence the job satisfaction of professionals. This is achieved by combining insights from policy implementation literature and organizational politics literature, and studying these relationships in a survey of 1.317 mental healthcare professionals implementing Diagnosis Related Groups. This work is reported in Chapter 8.

As noted, the first research question considers how one should conceptualize policy alienation. In the first two chapters, policy alienation is conceptualized based on (a) the work alienation literature from the sociology of work and organization field and (b) public administration literature. Having developed a sound measurement instrument for policy alienation in Chapter 5, one can empirically analyze the relationship of policy alienation to the more general concept of work alienation. This is carried out in Chapter 9 where we use the survey of 790 Dutch midwives to analyze the empirical relationship between policy alienation and work alienation. This is an interesting case to include in our study as the midwives were much more positive towards the policy being analyzed than the professionals groups (insurance physicians,

teachers, mental health professionals, labour experts) in our other case studies who, in general, had a fairly negative stance towards the policies concerned. In Chapter 9, we examine whether the policy alienation framework works in another context, and whether policy alienation is really different from work alienation. This provides increased insights into the discriminant and concurrent validities of policy alienation.

Finally, in Chapter 10 we provide a summary and draw conclusions, thereby focusing on answering the main research question: How can the policy alienation of public professionals be conceptualized and measured, and what are its influencing factors and effects?
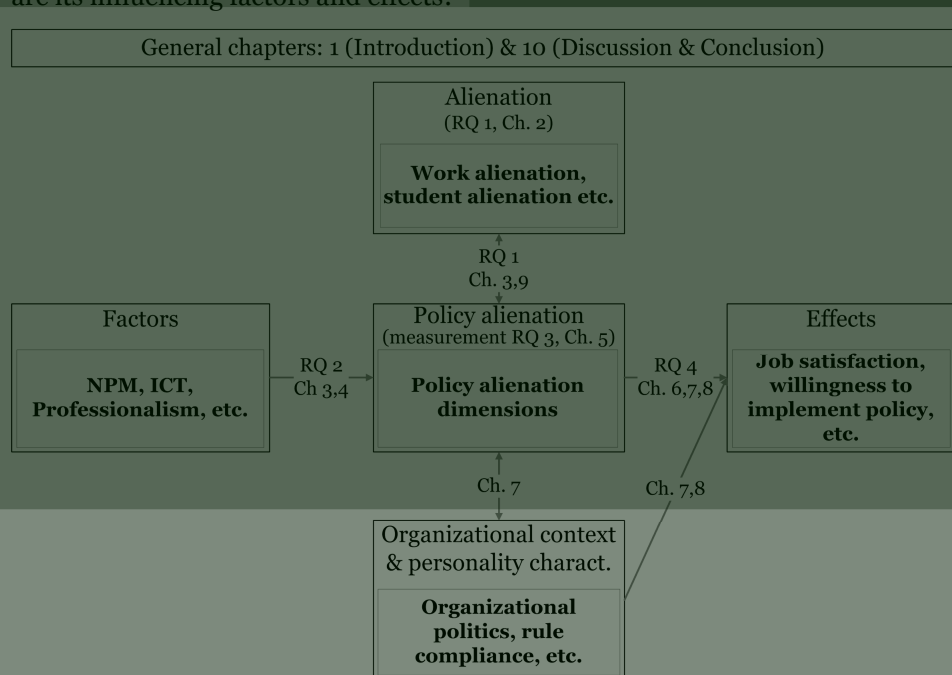
Figure 1.1 Graphical outline of the study, showing research questions (RQ) and chapters (Ch.)

1.6 OUR FOUR CRITERIA FOR POLICY SELECTION

In order to focus our research on specific national governmental policies, that were implemented by public professionals, we used four specific criteria which had to be met for a policy to be considered for inclusion in this study. In this section, we will discuss these criteria and show how the four policies which are being discussed in this thesis (re-examination of welfare clients, Second Phase model, Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare, twenty-week ultrasound) meet these criteria.

Criterion 1 - Policy is captured in national rules or regulations

The first criterion is that the policy should be captured in national rules and regulations. This criterion is chosen primarily because we are interested in *public* policies that are rooted in public administration. Secondly, a number of sub-dimensions of policy alienation dimensions explicitly focus on the national level. For instance, strategic powerlessness concerns the perceived degree of influence that professionals have over the content of a policy, as is captured in rules and regulations on a national level. Table 1.3 shows how the four cases meet this criterion.

Table 1.3 The way the policies were captured in national rules and regulations

Case	How is the policy captured in national rules and regulations?
1. Re-examination of welfare clients (ASB)	The modified assessment decree for people with work disabilities (ASB, "aangepast schattingsbesluit / herkeuringen") is recorded in the Dutch State journal 'Staatsblad', 2004, 434.
2. Second Phase model	The Law on the Second Phase model ("Tweede Fase") has been recorded in the Dutch State journal 'Staatsblad', 1997, 322.
3. Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare	DRGs in mental healthcare ("Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, DBC's") were recorded in national rules and regulations in 2007. More specifically, this concerns Reading MC-U-2803757, based on article 7 of the Law on Health Market Organization.
4. Structural ultrasound assessment (SEO)	Since 2007, the SEO ('Structureel Echoscopisch Onderzoek', or '20-weken echo'), is part of the Law on Medical Examinations of the Population (WBO, Wet Bevolkingsonderzoek) (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, 2007; Ruiter, 2007). This Law has been recorded in the Dutch State journal 'Staatsblad', 1997, 581.

Criterion 2 - Policy is being implemented by public professionals

The second criterion concerns the implementers of the policy. They have to be public professionals, meeting the definition provided in Section 1.2. This is important, as one of the primary reasons for this research is to contribute to the debate concerning the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery. We want to add to this debate by considering the ways(s) in which public policies influence public professionals.

A number of professional groups are included: insurance physicians and labor experts (in the ASB policy); secondary school teachers (Second Phase policy); psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists (DRG policy); and midwives (SEO policy). They can all be classified as public professionals. First,

they all work in the public sphere and deliver a personal service directly to members of the public. Second, they require long formal training. That is, at least a university degree (insurance physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists) or a higher vocational education, including additional specialist training (labor experts, secondary school teachers, midwives). Third, they have relatively high rewards and high status, although this may be questioned for secondary school teachers and for midwives.

Criterion 3 – The policy can be clearly distinguished

To measure the degree of policy alienation, the influencing factors and the effects properly, it is essential that the policy can be distinguished clearly from other policies. This is one reason why we chose to examine Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare rather than, for example, the new Health Insurance Law (Zorgverzekeringswet). The latter was very widespread in its application and interconnected with other laws, making it much more difficult for implementing professionals to distinguish which aspects of their work belonged to it. The four policies considered can be distinguished clearly from other related policies. For each of our four policies, we checked this in our initial field interviews, prior to moving on to further analyses.

Criterion 4 –Public professionals have opinions regarding the policy

The fourth criterion is that the public professionals should have opinions regarding the policy. This means that a policy should substantially influence the public professional, in positive, negative, or other ways. If professionals do not have any opinions on a policy, it becomes meaningless to try and determine the level of alienation toward the policy. As shown in Table 1.4, the professionals had opinions for all our selected policies.

Table 1.4 Opinions regarding the policies

Case	What manifestations of opinions regarding the policy were present?
1. Re-examination of welfare clients (ASB)	Many sources indicate that professionals had problems with the new work disability decree, such as reports by the professionals association (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; SRA, 2005), television broadcasts (Zembla, 2007), interviews (WAOcafé, 2005a; WAOcafé, 2005b; WAOcafé, 2005c; WAOcafé, 2006b), and newspaper articles (Kammer, 2005; Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005; Sengers, 2006; Volkskrant, 2005). On the other hand, more positive voices were also heard (for example WAOcafé, 2006a).
2. Second Phase model	The introduction of the Second Phase resulted in an intense public debate concerning secondary education. In general, teachers had negative opinions of this policy (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008a; Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b; Prick, 2006; Volkskrant, 2006). However, some teachers were more positive about this reform (Kips, 2003; Van Veen, Sleegers, Bergen, & Klaassen, 2001; Van Veen, 2003).
3. Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare	Many mental healthcare professionals were rather negative about the DRG policy. They manifested this in numerous ways, such as demonstrations, the establishment of websites agitating against the DRG policy and some negative journal articles (Koepel van DBC-vrije praktijken, 2007; Leffers & Emons, 2009; Palm et al., 2008; Smullen, forthcoming 2012; Van den Berg, 2010). On the other hand, some positive assessments were made (Janssen & Soeters, 2010; Verheul & Bruinsma, 2010).
4. Structural ultrasound assessment (SEO)	Unlike with the other three policies, the public professionals implementing the SEO were rather positive about this legislation (Koelewijn, 4-12-2003, initial own interviews, 2011). For instance, one midwife noted that "In my view it's great fun and very valuable for clients to run an ultrasound assessment (SEO). I can properly deal with this and do not feel limited." (open answer in survey described in this study). However, there were some negative comments, particularly regarding the possibility of abortion based on the results of the SEO (Mohango & Buitendijk, 2009; NRC, 2010).

As can be seen, the four policies selected all meet the criteria described above. We therefore can study these policies in order to answer our four research questions. Further, they serve different purposes. For instance, the case concerning the re-examination of welfare clients will be used as an exploratory case study to ground the theoretical framework on policy alienation (related to RQ 1). In comparison, the case of the mental healthcare professionals is used, among other things, to quantitatively examine the effects of policy alienation

(related to RQ 4). The cases are not all compared to one another, as in a comparative case study design. This was never a goal, and neither would it always be possible. For instance, the Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare case is not directly comparable to the Second Phase policy. The Diagnosis Related Groups policy primarily concerns a change in the financial reimbursement of professionals, whereas the Second Phase is a much more fundamental change, amounting to a very different view of the educational process (see Chapter 4). More generally, the policies are located in different sectors, such as in healthcare and in social security, which have logics on their own (Glouberman & Mintzberg, 2001; WRR, 2004). In this study, while the policies serve different purposes, they must at least share the four criteria discussed above.

1.7 Summary

We started this chapter with a short introduction to the subject of our study: the policy alienation of public professionals. We then provided some background by looking at the pressures that public professionals nowadays face and defining the two concepts which are paramount for this study: policy alienation and public professionals. Thereafter, we examined the theoretical, methodological, and practical values of this study and discussed the research questions and the study outline. Finally, we described the case selection criteria for the four policies examined in this study. In the next chapter, we will dive deeper into the background to alienation, by providing a historical analysis of the alienation concept. This provides a background for advancing the policy alienation concept.

2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ALIENATION CONCEPT

ABSTRACT

The goal of this chapter is to provide a historical overview of the alienation concept and to link this with features of the public sector and public policy implementation. This will help in conceptualizing policy alienation. The first section introduces the alienation concept, by examining its linguistic, theological, and political usages. Thereafter, we consider the 'founding fathers' of alienation: George Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel and Karl Marx. Following this, we discuss two leading scholars from the 'Frankfurter Schule': Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. They studied the works of Hegel and Marx and used the alienation concept in discussing the alienating tendencies in Western society. Last, we explore the relationships linking alienation, the nature of the public sector, and public policies. We do this by drawing on the works of Max Weber, Robert Merton, and Michael Lipsky. In the following chapter, we will develop the policy alienation concept by examining the more contemporary uses of alienation, and especially work alienation, starting with the works of Melvin Seeman and Robert Blauner - and relating this to the public administration literature.

"I stand in one spot, about two or three feet area, all night. The only time a person stops is when the line stops. We do about thirty-two jobs per car, per unit. Forty-eight units an hour, eight hours a day. Thirty-two times forty-eight times eight. Figure it out. That's how many times I push that button…. It don't stop. It just goes and goes and goes. I bet there's men who have lived and died out there, never seen the end of that line. And they never will – because it's endless. It's like a serpent. It's just all body, no tail. It can do things to you…"

Phil Stallings, production line worker in a Ford assembly plant, cited in Terkel (1974:221-222)

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we concentrate on the alienation concept. The goal is to provide a short historical overview of the alienation concept and to link this to features of the public sector and public policy implementation. This will help in understanding it, and in constructing a well-grounded definition of policy alienation.

The first section introduces the alienation concept by examining its linguistic, theological, and political usages. Following this, we consider the 'founding fathers' of alienation: George Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel and Karl Marx. Next, we discuss two leading scholars from the 'Frankfurter Schule': Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse who studied the works of Hegel and Marx and then used the alienation concept to discuss the alienating tendencies in the Western society of the 1950s and 1960s.

As we will use the concept of alienation in developing the policy alienation concept, which we want to apply in the public domain, we will need to explore the relationship between alienation, the nature of the public sector, and public policies. We do this by first examining the works of Max Weber, who can be seen as the seminal author when it comes to considering the principles of bureaucracy. Second, we will examine the works of Robert Merton, who developed the concept of the bureaucratic personality. Following this, we will link alienation to the policy implementation literature by examining the works of Michael Lipsky.

We end this chapter with an overview of the ideas of various authors concerning alienation (in Section 2.8) and look toward developing the policy alienation concept. This concept will be developed in the Chapter 3 by examining the more contemporary uses of uses of alienation, and especially work alienation, and relating these to the public administration literature.

One remark should be made here. Given the abundance of literature and the intrinsic difficulties with the alienation concept (such as the different philosophical meanings attached to it by Hegel as well as criticisms of these interpretations), we cannot provide a full historical analysis of the term in this chapter. However, we do discuss at some length the most important writers on the subject. We focus here primarily on alienation in a work context, as this is related to the policy alienation that public professionals might experience. Further, we provide an overview of the types of alienation, and the factors that influence these types, as discussed by the various authors. This provides a basis for developing the policy alienation concept. Readers interested in the history of alienation can refer to scholars who focus on this subject (such as Feuerlicht, 1978; Geyer & Heinz, 1992; Geyer, 1996; Kanungo, 1982; Schacht, 1970).

2.2 The linguistic, theological and political usages of alienation

The alienation term has a long history. Let us take a first look at its linguistic origins, and then its theological and political usages.

2.2.1 The linguistic origins of the alienation concept

The English term alienation derives from the original Latin noun 'alienatio', which in turn is derived from the verb 'alienare', meaning to take away or to remove (Kanungo, 1982). The German and English languages have a number of synonyms for alienation. In English, synonyms include estrangement and disaffection. The German terms for alienation are 'Entfremdung', 'Entäußerung' and 'Verdinglichung'. In Dutch, there is only one word ('vervreemding') (Van Dooren & Van Strien, 1975:13). Looking at the term alienation, one can discern three distinct meanings (Feuerlicht, 1978:3-4; cf. Kanungo, 1982:9). The first meaning is primarily applicable in the legal and economic realms and concerns the transfer of property ownership. To alienate something is to transfer property from yourself to someone else. In this sense, selling is a form of alienation, as it amounts to the giving up of certain rights. The second meaning is broader: a state of separation or dissociation. Here, one can become alienated from other people, such as friends; or someone can feel alienated from nature, or from society. The last meaning of alienation – which is less often used - corresponds to insanity: being separated from yourself because of a mental disorder.

2.2.2 Theological usage of the alienation concept

The second meaning of alienation - of a state of separation - has often been used in theological writings (Kanungo, 1982). In these theological writings, it often refers to a separation from God. In this sense, the alienation term already

appears in the Old and New Testaments (Fromm, 1991 [1955]; Kanungo, 1982). For instance, in The Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians it is written (Ephesians, 4:17-18):

> *"Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart."*

This theological usage of the alienation term as 'a state of separation from God' is also seen in the work of Calvin (1854:219). He notes that "spiritual death is nothing more else than alienation of the soul from God". It is not only in Christianity but also in other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, that alienation has been interpreted as a state of separation from God (Kanungo, 1982:9; see also Van Dooren & Van Strien, 1975).

2.2.3 Political usage of the alienation concept

Following on from theology, the alienation term was later also used in political theory. Alienation was here viewed as 'a transfer of ownership', which corresponds to the first meaning of alienation given above (Kanungo, 1982:10). This usage started with the works of social-contract theorists such as Grotius and Rousseau. Hugo Grotius (1853) was the first social-contract theorist to use alienation to mean the transfer of authority over oneself to another person. According to Grotius, transferring the right of self-determination to someone else is like transferring the ownership of property. Such alienation represents limits on individual authority and forms the basis of all political authority. Rousseau (1947), in his social-contract theory, used the alienation term to mean the total surrender of an individual's person and power to the collective general will. However, he insists that, unlike in the traditional approaches to the social-contract, man cannot eliminate his freedom: "each man, in giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody". This means, according to Rousseau, that the individual has not lost anything by contracting out of his 'natural liberty'. On the contrary, he gains "civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses" (Mészáros, 1970:53). We can see here that alienation, as used by Rousseau, is not inherently a negative state.

Having discussed the linguistic, theological, and political origins of the term alienation, we can look at the works of Hegel and Marx. The term alienation, as it used after the Second World War, directly relates to the seminal works of

Hegel and Marx (Van Dooren & Van Strien, 1975:11). Indeed, Fromm (1966) noted that it was Hegel who gave alienation a more robust analytical basis and, along with Marx, laid the intellectual foundations for understanding the problems of alienation in modern society (see also Kanungo, 1982:11; Overend, 1975:306). Fromm himself in his 'The sane society' (1991 [1955]) and 'Marx´s concept of Man' (1966) draws primarily on Marx. Marcuse, in his 'One-Dimensional Man' (1986 [1964]), also drew on Marx, although Freud was also an important inspirational source. Further, contemporary work alienation scholars continue to draw on Marx, and to a lesser extent on Hegel (B. Bozeman & Rainey, 1998; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Hirschfeld, 2002; Mulford, Waldner-Haugrud, & Gajbhiye, 1993; Pandey, 1995; Sarros et al., 2002).

2.3   George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel on alienation

The most important ideas of Hegel concerning alienation can be found in his Phenomenology of Mind / Phenomenology of Spirit (1807) and his Philosophy of History (1837) (Kain, 2005). In Hegel's work, the alienation concept was very prominent. He writes in his Philosophy of History that (cited in Overend, 1975:306):

> *"The history of man was at the same time the history of man's alienation (Entfremdung) [...] What the mind really strives for, is the realization of its own notion; but in doing so it hides that goal from its own vision and is proud and well satisfied in this alienation from its 'own essence'."*

In his study on alienation, Hegel was influenced by a number of important philosophers including Rousseau and Schiller. He was influenced by Rousseau when it came to the discussion of alienation as the total surrender of an individual's person and power to the collective general will. He also drew on the work of Schiller, who retained the theological usage of alienation - as a state of separation from God. These influences led Hegel to use two distinct words for alienation: Entfremdung (a state of separation) and Entäusserung (surrender/divesture) to describe the different meanings attached to alienation (Kanungo, 1982).

In his Phenomenology, Hegel works out his thoughts on alienation. He uses the term at a very high level of philosophical generality. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish with some precision the different meanings he gives to the term alienation. Kanungo (1982:12 see also Hardimon, 1994:120-121) notes that Hegel conceived of two types of alienation (cf. Feuerlicht, 1978:9; cf. Lukács, 1993:480).

First, there is the conscious experience of alienation as *a state of separation*. A person might experience this type of alienation when he or she ceases to identify with the 'social substance', or with specific cultural, social, or political institutions. This first type of alienation takes place when a certain change in a person's self-conception takes place. As such, it is not something one does or does not do. Rather, it reflects a state of consciousness that a condition of separation has come to exist for the person. The second type of alienation refers to the *transfer of individual rights*. In contrast to the first type, this transfer of rights is something deliberate (Kanungo, 1982:12). This involves the transfer, or surrender, of rights with the intention to secure a desired end; namely, unity with the social substance.

The difference between these two types can be illustrated with an example, based on Van Dooren & Van Strien (1975: 13-14). When I make something – for instance a painting – it is firstly something of me, totally mine. But when this painting is finished, it will lead another 'life' outside of me. The painting is sold and certain meanings can be attached to it, which may not be intended. In this phase, the first type of alienation can occur. Although I do not influence it, the painting can get certain connotations in society, which also reflects on me. Alienation in this sense considers the power of the own products over the producer of these products. From this point there are two possibilities. The first possibility is undesirable. In this situation, the painting will continue to influence me. I do not act on this situation. As a result, I will not grow as a person. I will freeze and as I cannot develop myself anymore, I will in the end become self-alienated. The second possibility however, is desirable. In this situation, the alienation is neutralized as I 'surrender' to this state of separation. I accept that the painting is no longer mine, and has a life of its own. Hence, I act on the given situation. This is a desirable situation, as – according to Hegel – the dialectic development of a person can only occur when alienation takes place and this alienation is accepted (Vincent, 1989:22). This will make me grow as a person.

2.4   KARL MARX ON ALIENATION

Karl Marx studied the works of Hegel on alienation intensively, although he was also influenced by others including Moses Hess. Not surprisingly, given that Marx studied the works of Hegel, there are similarities between the two authors. For instance, the two meanings of alienation, as separation and as surrender, were the starting point for Marx in interpreting the alienation of labor (Kanungo, 1982:13). However, there are also a number of differences. An important difference is that Marx spoke of alienation in an economic sense (alienation of labor), rather than the more abstract spiritual sense (Kanungo,

1982:13; Vincent, 1989:22). For Marx, all sources of alienation have their source in economic phenomena, such as waged labor and the division of labor. This was not the case for Hegel, for him alienation, especially in its positive form, could be found independently. Kain (1982:78) notes here that:

> *"If we had to point to the fundamental source of alienation for Hegel, we would point to the self-struggle and development of spirit; wage labor, exchange, the economic realm in general, can be seen as one expression of the struggle, but certainly not as the fundamental source of alienation and estrangement. For Marx, alienation and estrangement, even in religious or political spheres, have their source in the economic and social realm."*

Marx developed his thoughts on alienation in his 'Manuskripte', originally published in 1844, most notably in his essay 'Alienated Labor'. Marx did agree with labor having a positive side: it was a means to self-fulfillment for people. However, in those new, industrial times, Marx sees that labor in itself has become alienated (Brouwers, 1999:16). It is important to note here that Marx discusses *objective* work alienation: the workers have become alienated because they no longer own the means of production or the resulting products. This is in contrast to Hegel, who speaks (for the most part) about subjective alienation (as do many modern-day scholars, see Hall (1994)). In Hegel's view, people can become subjectively alienated because they feel estranged from certain institutions or things in the world, which they regard as alien and hostile (Hardimon, 1994:133). In the Marxist view, workers may feel that they are not alienated (such that there is no subjective alienation), but still be alienated in an objective sense because they do not own the product or the production process. Considering objective alienation to the production process, Marx writes the following (1961 [1844]:100):

> *"This relation [the relation of labor to the act of production] is the relation of the worker to his own activity as an alien activity not belonging to him; it is activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating, the worker's own physical and mental energy, his personal life or what is life other than activity – as an activity which is turned against him, neither depends nor belongs to him."*

We now consider an important point in the works of Marx on alienation: the factors that influence alienation. One potentially important factor influencing

alienation is the existence of private property. However, Marx is ambiguous in this respect: he sometimes notes that private property is a factor influencing alienation, and sometimes that it is an effect (Feuerlicht, 1978:130). In the following citation, for example, he explicitly states that private property is an effect of alienation (Marx, 1961 [1844]:106):

> *"True, it is as a result of the movement of private property that we have obtained the concept of alienated labor (of alienated life) in political economy. But on analysis of this concept it becomes clear that though private property appears to be the source, the cause of alienated labor, it is really its consequence".*

However, one page further (p.107), we find one of his famous statements, that to end the alienation of work, workers should be emancipated, and private property should be abandoned: "From the relationship of estranged labor to private property it further follows that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the political form of the emancipation of the workers." Here, Marx states that cancelling private property would stop alienation, and hence he must view private property as one of the main influencing factors. How can private property be both an effect of and a factor that influences alienation? Feuerlicht (1978:130) views this as a weakness in the works of Marx. However, one could also see this a process of circular (or reciprocal) causality: eventually it is no longer possible to state if private property is a factor or an effect: alienation and private property reinforce each other. More private property (in the hands of a few well-established owners) would mean greater work alienation for workers. These workers then develop even more private property, which will end up belonging to the already well-established owners (as others do not own any property). This private property will increase work alienation yet further (see also Vincent, 1989:23). Hence, private property can be seen as both a factor influencing alienation, and as an effect of alienation.

In another essay, 'The German Ideology', Marx states that the division of labor is the most important factor in influencing alienation, not private property (Feuerlicht, 1978:132). When this division of labor is in place, everyone has a definitive activity that they cannot abandon: people have become 'locked-in': "He is a hunter, a fisherman, or a shepherd or a critic, and has to remain it if he wants to make a living" (Marx & Engels, 1970:53). In a Communist society, Marx believed, nobody would be restricted to a special field. Society controls production and therefore makes it possible for everyone to do one thing today, and something else the next. However, such a situation without specializations

does not seem very realistic (Brouwers, 1999; Feuerlicht, 1978). To summarize, for Marx, private property and the division of labor were factors that could influence work alienation.

We now examine the four different types of alienation distinguished by Marx (Feuerlicht, 1978:130-131; Van Dooren & Van Strien, 1975:17; Vincent, 1989:23). The first type of alienation concerns the product of labor. It considers the relationship between the subject (the worker making the product) and the object (the resulting product). As the subject no longer owns the object (as a result of the division between labor and private property), the object has power over the subject. This type of alienation closely resembles Hegel's first type of alienation and can be termed *alienation from the product of labor*. The second type of alienation concerns the relationship of the subject with the production process. As with the resulting product, the subject no longer has any power over the process of producing. The subject has no control over the use and exchange of his labor/power. One factor here is that the subject's labor power is commodified into exchange value through wages. A worker is thus alienated from an unmediated relationship with his activity through these wages. As a consequence, Marx argues, the subject has become *alienated from the production process*.

The third type of alienation is *self-alienation* or, as Marx calls it, alienation from the species being or alienation from the essence of a species. Species being is a concept that Marx uses to refer to what he sees as the original or intrinsic essence of people. In his view, there is a human need to develop. This need for development is characterized by plurality and dynamism. People possess the tendency and desire to engage in multiple, valuable activities to promote their mutual survival, comfort, and sense of inter-connection. The division of labor within Industrial Capitalism blunts the workers' 'species being'. This is because, in Industrial Capitalism, the worker has become alienated from the product (Marx's alienation type 1) and from the production process (type 2). It positions the worker as a replaceable thing, a 'cog in a machine', rather than giving him the possibility to define his own value through direct, purposeful activity. Therefore, this alienation from the species being is a result of alienation from the product and from the production process (Vincent, 1989).

The fourth and final type of alienation is *alienation from man-to-man*. This is a result of the previous three types of alienation: "An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labor, from his life-activity, from his species being is the estrangement of man from man." (Marx, 1961 [1844]:103). These three types of alienation reduce labor to a commercial commodity which can be traded on a market, instead of it being a social relationship between people involved in a common purposeful effort for

survival or a better society. Consequently, the relationships between workers become prone to conflict: workers are set up against other workers, members of the same class no longer have mutual interests. According to Marx, this results in man-to-man alienation.

The discussion above shows that Marx primarily focused on alienation in the economic realm. In the next section, we will examine two authors from the Frankfurter Schule, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. They extensively studied the works of Marx and Hegel, but were also influenced by other influential thinkers, such as Feuerbach (a Hegelian), Durkheim[1] and Freud.

2.5   ERICH FROMM ON ALIENATION

Erich Fromm was one of the leading members of the Frankfurter Schule on the subject of alienation. He was inspired by Marx (even writing a book entitled 'Marx's Concept of Man'). Fromm notes that alienation is even more pervasive than Marx believed. He uses the term in a variety of ways, moving beyond the alienation of labor as proposed by Marx (Schacht, 1970:118). Next to Marx, Fromm, being a psychoanalyst himself, also draws extensively on Freud. He uses psychoanalytic arguments to further develop the, as he sees it, somewhat simplistic notions of human psychology advanced by Marx (Vincent, 1989:26). He uses alienation types such as alienation from nature (three sub-types), alienation from others, self-alienation, and alienation from man-to-man. His conceptualization is therefore rather broad (Fromm, 1991 [1955]:120-121):

> *"By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself [self-alienation, LT]. [...] The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person [man-to-man alienation, LT]. He, like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside [alienation from nature, LT] productively."*

The main factor in alienation according to Fromm is, as with Marx, the existence of capitalism (i.e. private property). This does not mean that alienation is unique to capitalism, it can also be found in other social structures.

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[1] Emile Durkheim developed a concept which is highly related to alienation: that of anomie (meaning without laws, or no laws). For the similarities and differences between anomie and alienation, see Giddens (1971), Lukes (1990) or Hamilton (1990).

However, capitalism is a societal structure that greatly increases alienation as it is ever present in all aspects of life. Capitalism not only influences the relationship of a person with his work, but also his relationship with the state, his consumptions, his fellow man, and himself. Capitalism leads to a particular production system, which is dictated by competition making efficiency a dominant value. Labor itself becomes highly monotonous and does not leave room for creativity, which will result in alienation. Further, the bureaucratic organization of society also creates alienation. Civil servants (bureaucrats) specialize in the administration of objects and people. By the sheer size of the bureaucratic machinery, and the resulting abstraction, the relationship between civil servants and citizens is one of complete alienation. Hence, the structure of capitalism (of which a bureaucratic organization is one effect) leads, according to Fromm, to alienation.

We will now consider a number of alienation types distinguished by Fromm. Our focus here is on alienation types which have a direct or indirect relationship with work, as this study concerns the alienation of public professionals in a work context. Further, we limit ourselves in this discussion to new types of alienation developed by Fromm; although he also looked at other alienation types which we have already discussed, such as work alienation and man-to-man alienation (for a more elaborate analysis, including a critique, see Schacht, 1970:118-140).

We have touched upon the first of these types of alienation already: the alienation of the civil servant. Civil servants can be alienated in at least three aspects: from themselves (Fromm, 1991 [1955]:127), from their work (ibid.:137) and from their citizens (Fromm, 2005 [1976]:150). Here, we focus on the alienation from citizens, as this is a particularly novel idea of Fromm. As civil servants are supposed to follow general rules in interacting with citizens (not using personal relationships or giving specific favors, see also Weber, (1978:958)), citizens become objects for civil servants. According to Fromm, these civil servants do not have any feelings for these objects: they treat them impersonally. Civil servants treat people like numbers, like objects: "Bureaucrats fear personal responsibility and seek refuge behind their rules; their security and pride lie in their loyalty to rules, not in their loyalty to the laws of the human heart." (Fromm, 2005 [1976]:150). Fromm here provides a frightening, extreme case of the alienated civil servant: Adolf Eichmann. For Eichmann, men, women, and children had become numbers, from whom he was completely estranged (Fromm, 1984:8).

A second relevant type of alienation is the alienation of the owner of an organization to that organization. When someone is the sole owner of a small organization, alienation occurs as he is "living in an alienated world in all other

economic and social aspects, and furthermore being under the constant pressure of bigger competitors" (Fromm, 1991 [1955]:127). The owner of a large organization is alienated because his possessions have a fluctuating value, and have a negligible influence on total production (for example the total production of a country) (Vincent, 1989:24). Fromm views this type of alienation as something negative, consonant with his generally negative perspective of alienation.

A third type addresses alienation from consumption. According to Fromm, consumption is alienating as it no longer satisfies our intrinsic needs: Consumption "is determined by advertising slogans rather than by our real needs, our palates, our eyes, or our ears" (1997:35). We no longer buy things because we need them, we buy them because we just want to buy, influenced by advertisements or society in general. A good example here is the fact that, for many people, buying things ('shopping') has become an end in itself. Before capitalism, consumption was a means to an end. Now, consumption has become an end in itself (1997:134). This focus on consumption in a capitalist society results in alienation: one has to decide "whether he prefers maximal consumption and thus maximal alienation, or a lesser degree of consumption, that is, consumption as a means for a human richer life kept within dimensions that fit human reality" (1997:58).

Fourthly, Fromm speaks of self-alienation (for a critical view on this conceptualization, see Feuerlicht, 1978:61). This closely resembles the alienation from species being developed by Marx. Self-alienation occurs when "man experiences himself as a thing to be employed successfully on the market [...] His sense of self does not stem from his activity as a loving and thinking individual, but from his socio-economic role" (Fromm, 1991 [1955]:141-142). A person no longer experiences himself as a human being, but as an abstraction, a thing, or a company. He has become a thing, and things do not have a self or soul. His aim has become to sell himself successfully. His sense of self does not stem from his activity as a human with intrinsic needs, but from his socio-economic role. When the self disappears, so does the experience of identity. This can result in insanity, coincidentally one of the meanings of alienation (see 2.2). However, normally, people do not become insane but instead create a 'secondary self'. This secondary self is portrayed vividly in the smile of the waiter. If this smile is not genuine, it has, in a sense, become alienated from the waiter himself. He has become two people: one true self (a human being with intrinsic needs), and a socioeconomic self (a waiter, his 'second self'). A self-alienated person sees himself partly as someone who has been accepted by society, who is successful, who is a sellable product for others (Vincent, 1989:25). However, if he no longer feels accepted, feels he has become worthless

to others, he will lose himself. Fromm was very concerned about this aspect of capitalism, which he thought resulted from the routinization of society. He famously stated that (1965:33):

> *"In the 19th century inhumanity meant cruelty; in the 20th century it means schizoid self-alienation. The danger of the past was that men became slaves. The danger of the future is that men become robots. [...] Given man's nature, robots cannot live and remain the same, they become 'Golems', they will destroy their world and themselves because they cannot longer stand the boredom of a meaningless life."*

However, one can be quite critical as to the existence of this high level of self-alienation. First, self-alienation – or the suppression or absence of the true self – is not unique to modern times: socioeconomic roles have, in one way or another, always existed. Second, there is no agreement on what the true self really is. Is it about thinking or feeling, is it the civilized man or the primitive man (Feuerlicht, 1978:61)?

In this section, we have looked at a number of alienation types as developed by Fromm. According to him, one of the primary causes of alienation is capitalism. We have also looked at more direct causes of the different types of alienation but these are, by definition, incomplete due to the intrinsic relationships between the mechanisms. There are observers who argue against Fromm's alienation typology (for instance Feuerlicht, 1978:61; Schacht, 1970:140). Despite this, it remains the case that Erich Fromm broadened the scope of the alienation concept beyond its purely economic, labor orientation, and applied it to numerous other fields. In the next section, we will examine another important member of the Frankfurter Schule: Herbert Marcuse. He stated that contemporary 'one-dimensional man' was not only alienated from the labor system and his social environment, but also in his inner, psychological structure.

2.6   Herbert Marcuse on alienation

Herbert Marcuse wrote about alienation is his famous book ´One dimensional man´ (1986 [1964]). Marcuse extensively drew on the ideas of other scholars, most notably of Marx, Freud, and Heidegger (Feuerlicht, 1978:33). Further, his ideas have a lot in common with those of Fromm, although his solutions for the abolishment of alienation are quite different. To grasps his thoughts better, we need to consider his view on the society of his time.

Marcuse had a fairly negative view on, as he called it, the advanced industrial society. He saw this society as repressing people and creating 'false needs': "needs which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in [a person's] repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice" (Marcuse, 1986 [1964]:7). These needs might be gratifying in the first instance, such as the needs to relax or to have fun, but they are false needs and therefore ungratifying when they are unrelated to real human needs and only correspond with, for example, advertisements or societal customs. These false needs integrate people into the existing system of production and consumption through advertising, mass media, and contemporary modes of thought. Coupled with the development of false needs, the role of technology is important in this advanced industrial society. Marcuse does not view technology as a value-free instrument, a view he shares with some more recent thinkers on technology such as Zuboff and Webster (2004) and Beniger (1985, in Kumar, 2004). Marcuse views technology as an instrument that represents political value and one which can discipline people. An advanced industrial society develops such disciplining technology. Further, in an advanced industrial society, the productive interests of the capitalists also control the state and the mass media, and even the realms of language, thought, and imagination. In these realms, there are no longer goals that are not production-related. Imagination, one of the deepest dimensions of culture, is dominated by mass media and politics, which focus on producing commercially exploitable products. The laws of production therefore not only influence our actions but also profoundly influence our deepest desires and imaginations. Other thoughts or imaginings are no longer possible in such a society. Marcuse (1986 [1964]:14) writes that there:

> *"Emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension."*

As such, Marcuse is talking about a new 'totalitarian' society which regulates the entire lives of people, especially their physical and psychological needs (Vincent, 1989:26).

The one-dimensionality of the advanced industrial society can lead to alienation, as the focus is on only one human ability: production. This contradicts the intrinsic need of a person, which is their dialectical development

as a human. As such, we can see that the thoughts of Marcuse fit with those of Hegel and Marx. For Marcuse, the development of the human being lies primarily in free, individual, creative subjectivity, such as critical thinking. However, when a person in his economic and social life is administered by "a technical labor apparatus and conforms to dominant social norms, [he, LT] is losing his potentialities of self-determination and individuality" (Kellner in Marcuse, 1986 [1964]:xxviii). Eventually, this will lead to alienation.

Marcuse distinguishes between four alienation types, although these are not worked out as systematically as in Fromm. They can, however, be distinguished from his works as: (a) alienation from society; (b) artistic alienation (meaning that when art becomes mainstream, it can no longer be a force of opposition to the mainstream); (c) alienation from oneself (or self-alienation); and (d) man-to-man alienation (Vincent, 1989). Considering self-alienation, it should be remarked that it is possible for a person to be unaware of his self-alienation. In a sense, there is no subjective alienation, only objective alienation, and this is comparable to the 'second self' of Fromm and the self-alienation concept developed by Marx.

2.7 Bureaucracy, public policy and alienation

In the previous section, a short historical background on alienation was provided. In this study, we will use the concept of alienation in developing the policy alienation concept, which is then applied in the public domain. To achieve this, we need to explore the relationship between alienation, the nature of the public sector, and public policies. First, we examine the works of Max Weber, who can be seen as the seminal author on the principles of bureaucracy. Second, we will examine the works of Robert Merton, who developed the concept of the bureaucratic personality. Third, we will link alienation to the policy implementation literature by examining the works of Lipsky.

2.7.1 Max Weber: bureaucracy and alienation

Max Weber was a German sociologist, most famous for his works on the protestant ethic and on bureaucracy. In this study, we especially look at the thoughts of Weber concerning bureaucracy. Weber developed his ideas on bureaucracy based on types of legitimate authority. According to Weber, there are three ideal types of legitimate authority (Weber, 1978:215): authority based on rational grounds (legal authority); authority based on traditional grounds (traditional authority); and authority based on charismatic grounds (charismatic authority). Legal authority is considered the dominant form in the Western world. In this ideal type, someone who holds authority does so by virtue of impersonal norms. These norms are not based on a tradition or

charismatic leadership, but have been consciously established within a context of rationality. In an ideal-typical situation, those who are subject to authority by a superior obey because they accept the impersonal norms which accompany that authority, not because of the personal characteristics of that person (such as charisma) (Giddens, 1971). In the words of Weber (1978:215-216): "In the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the legally established impersonal order. It extends to the persons exercising the authority of office under it by virtue of the formal legality of their commands and only within the scope of authority of the office."

An ideal-typical bureaucracy uses legal authority as a means of organizing. This bureaucratic structure has a number of advantages, such as efficiency and reducing the risks of nepotism. When examining this in the professional domain, we also see that it has advantages for professionals. For instance, professional organizations can develop protocols and entry criteria that provide occupational closure and enhance the quality of work (Abbott, 1988). In these ways, they use bureaucratic mechanisms to safeguard professional interests.

However, the rationalizing elements of bureaucratic systems can also give rise to alienation (Van Strien, 1975:66). Applying rationality reduces transactions to a number of essential parts, each of which would be carried out by a person who only engages in that single practice (compare with the professional and machine bureaucracy ideas in Mintzberg, 1983b). As a result of the size of the bureaucratic machinery, and the resulting abstraction, bureaucrats can then become alienated from their citizens (see also Fromm, 1991 [1955]:126). In this respect, Weber writes that (1978:958, italics in original):

> *"The management of the office follows general rules [...] The reduction of modern office management to rules is deeply embedded in its very nature. The theory of modern public administration, for instance, assumes that the authority to order certain matters by decree – which has been legally granted to an agency – does not entitle the agency to regulate the matter by individual commands, but only to regulate the matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor."*

In this way, bureaucrats can become 'cogs in a machine', alienated from their work or from citizens. They do not see how their work relates to the overall

structure, and hence acquire feelings that their work is meaningless. Interpreting Weber, Swedberg (2005:124) states that "Modern society, mainly through the growth of bureaucracy and rational capitalism, creates pressure on the individual to conform and behave in a disciplined and uniform manner. Capitalism also leads to what Weber terms depersonalization". Depersonalization can be seen as Weber's equivalent of Marx's alienation (Swedberg, 2005:60). To sum up, although Weber felt that a bureaucratic structure had a number of essential advantages, he was also concerned with its potentially negative alienating effects on employees working in such a bureaucracy. We will discuss this in more detail in the next section, when we look at the phenomenon of the 'bureaucratic personality', a concept developed by Robert Merton.

2.7.2 Robert Merton: bureaucratic personality and alienation

Robert Merton was a distinguished sociologist who developed important sociological concepts such as 'unintended consequences', 'self-fulfilling prophecy', and 'goal displacement'. Further, he wrote extensively on anomie (Merton, 1938; Merton, 1949), clearly being influenced by Durkheim. Merton was also heavily influenced by Max Weber's ideas on formal, rationally organized structures such as bureaucracy (Merton, 1949:195-205; Merton, Gray, Hocky, & Selvin, 1952). In line with Weber, Merton believed that an ideal-typical bureaucratic structure had numerous advantages. Most importantly, its chief advantage was its efficiency, with a premium placed on speed and precision. Further, the lifelong tenure, pensions, and good salaries increased the devotion to the performance of official duties. However, the bureaucracy could also have perverse effects. In a seminal essay, 'The bureaucratic structure and personality', Merton (1940) discusses these dysfunctional aspects of bureaucracy and the related development of a 'bureaucratic personality'.

For a bureaucracy to operate successfully, it should be reliable, and it should conform to prescribed patterns of action. As a result, bureaucrats can feel a constant disciplining pressure to conform to these prescribed patterns of action. According to Merton, in order to ensure this discipline, it seems that the sentiments of the bureaucrats are often more intense than is technically necessary (1949:199). As a result, the bureaucrats come to regard the concrete rules of the organization (the means, such as writing speeding tickets) as more important than the overall aims (such as increasing road safety). As such, goal displacement takes place. Another outcome of this emphasis on rules, according to Merton, is that bureaucrats become rigid and conservative.

Turning to specifics, there are, according to Merton, particular features of the bureaucratic structure which strengthen a 'bureaucratic personality'. One

is the *career structure* of the bureaucrat (Allinson, 1982:380; Merton, 1949:200): the traditional bureaucratic career structure is typified by promotion based on seniority, job security, and regular, structural, small salary increases. This is designed to discipline action and encourage conformity. According to Merton, this causes bureaucrats to have "an over-concern with strict adherence to regulations which induces timidity, conservatism and technicism" (1949:201). Second, but related to the first aspect, bureaucrats have a high *'esprit de corps'* - they share the same interests and, also to an extent, because there is little competition as promotion is based on seniority. As a result, Merton argues, these bureaucrats will defend their entrenched interests and will not readily assist clients or politicians. Third, the stress on the *depersonalization of relationships* plays a part in the bureaucratic personality. Bureaucrats are stimulated to minimize personal relationships and to apply general rules to specific cases. As a result, some come to see the rules as 'sacred', and follow them in an impersonal manner, according to the 'rule-book', without taking into account the individual peculiarities of each case. In such a situation, the bureaucratic personality results in conflicts with citizens/clients or politicians. Fourth, bureaucrats are, in their roles, *representatives of a bureaucratic structure*, which often has a monopoly over certain services or products. As a result, a bureaucrat has clear authority over citizens. Many administrators are so mindful of this organizational status that they do not hide it when they deal with clients, which can give the impression of a dominant attitude (Allinson, 1982). Many of us can recall personal situations where we experienced such attitudes by bureaucrats!

As a result of these features of a bureaucracy, the idea of a bureaucratic personality comes to mind. Based on the above discussion, we can identify six related characteristics of such a 'bureaucratic personality': Someone with a (ideal-type) bureaucratic personality is:

1. Highly *rule-compliant*: they strictly adhere to the rules, over and above the needs of the citizens/clients being addressed.
2. *Timid.*
3. High on *technicism*: they have an overconfident view in technology as a benefactor of society.
4. *Conservative.*
5. *Inwardly focused*: they have a preference for helping fellow employees rather than clients or politicians.
6. Perceived to be *dominant* in their interactions with citizens/clients.

We can now relate this 'bureaucratic personality' to the alienation concept (cf. B. Bozeman & Rainey, 1998). Merton notes that the bureaucratic personality is a

result of features the bureaucracy, such as the depersonalization of relationships. The degree of alienation can also be heightened by bureaucratic features. For instance, Aiken and Hage (1966) concluded that employees working in organizations that more strongly conformed to bureaucratic arrangements experienced greater work alienation. In organizations with more centralization and formalization, there are less opportunities for staff to participate in decisions concerning organizational policies and individual tasks. Furthermore, there are strict rules and the rules are often heavily enforced, increasing the degree of powerlessness (ibid.:506). Hence, bureaucratic features can enhance both a bureaucratic personality and work alienation.

To summarize, the main conclusion is that work alienation and a bureaucratic personality can both result from bureaucratic features of an organization. Further, based on these arguments, we believe that a bureaucratic personality and work alienation can be mutually influential. However, how this happens is not clear-cut given the numerous dimensions of both work alienation and bureaucratic personality. For instance, employees who are highly rule-compliant (a dimension/characteristic of a bureaucratic personality) could as a result feel more restricted in their work (powerlessness, a dimension of work alienation). On the other hand, employees whose perceptions are that they cannot influence many decisions (powerlessness, a dimension of work alienation) may become more timid (a dimension/characteristic of a bureaucratic personality).

2.7.3 Michael Lipsky: public policy, street-level bureaucrats and alienation

Wheras Weber and Merton discussed extensively the features of a bureaucracy in general, Michael Lipsky focused his attention on the policymaking process, and especially the role of public service workers in implementing these policies.

In his book 'Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services', Lipsky (1980) analyzed the behavior of front-line staff in policy delivery agencies. Lipsky refers to these frontline workers 'street-level bureaucrats'. These are public employees who "interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and have substantial discretion in the execution of their work" (1980:3). Examples are teachers, police officers, and judges. These street-level bureaucrats implement public policies. However, there are intrinsic problems when implementing public policies: street-level bureaucrats have to respond to citizens with only a limited amount of information or only a limited amount of time to make a decision. In response, they develop coping mechanisms. They simplify the nature of their job or develop routines so that they feel they are doing their job well in some way. This is possible as they have a certain degree of discretion in their work (1980:14). As a consequence, these

street-level bureaucrats are in fact 'making' the policy: "the decision of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively *become* the public policies they carry out." (1980:xii, 84)

The way in which Lipsky analyzed policy process can be seen as a major shift in the view of policy processes. In other analyses (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984; Sabatier & Mazmanien, 1979; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), a 'top-down' approach was used in which policy formation and policy execution are considered as distinct activities. Conversely, Michael Lipsky stressed a 'bottom-up' approach, arguing that frontline workers play an active part in implementation and, by using their discretion, influence policy. Lipsky argues that policy implementation processes should not be studied primarily from the central, high-ranking government offices (i.e. from the top) but, rather, from the crowded offices where street-level bureaucrats interact with citizens (i.e. from the bottom). According to Lipsky, the arguments of top-down scholars for improving policy implementation are often beside the point. For instance, when top-down scholars emphasize control in order to reach the 'policy hypothesis', this simply increases the tendency of street-level bureaucrats to stereotype and disregard the needs of the clients, which ends up negatively influencing policy effectiveness (Hill & Hupe, 2009:52).

Alongside analyzing the role of street-level bureaucrats in the policy implementation process, Lipsky also considers the effects of the policy process and bureaucratic features on street-level bureaucrats themselves. In Lipsky's view, street-level work is by definition alienating. He notes that "alienation as used here is a concept summarizing the relationship of workers to their work" (1980:75). In so doing, he was focusing on the *work* alienation of these public sector employees. In some aspects, the work of street-level bureaucrats is quite alienating. For example, street-level bureaucrats experience high work pressures and can only devote a limited amount of time and resources to clients when implementing policy. As a result, they are often unable to fully respond to the needs of clients, making their work less meaningful. Further, street-level bureaucrats only treat part of a client's problems. For instance, a young unemployed mother can have to meet an insurance physician, a labor expert, *and* a social security officer to address her employment problems; a child welfare worker for problems with raising a child; and a legal officer over her unpaid bills. The more these problems are interconnected, the more this ' putting problems in categories' tendency will alienate street-level bureaucrats (1980:77). Related to this, street-level bureaucrats often have little control over the outcome of their work. Nevertheless, some aspects of the work of street-level bureaucrats are less alienating. Most importantly, street-level bureaucrats often

have a certain degree of discretion, separating them from the classic assembly-line worker (1980:75).

2.8   Summary and outlook

The goal of this chapter has been to provide a short historical overview of the alienation concept and to link this concept to features of the public sector and public policy implementation. The chapter started with the different meanings attached to alienation in linguistic, theological, and political perspectives. Next, we considered the 'founding fathers' of alienation, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx. Marx was influenced by Hegel, but an important distinction is that Marx was the first to speak of alienation of labor, compared with the rather more abstract spiritual alienation discussed by Hegel. Next, we examined the works of two leading scholars from the 'Frankfurter Schule', Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. They used the alienation concept to discuss the alienating tendencies in the Western society of the 1950s and 1960s. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the various factors influencing alienation, and of the different types of alienation addressed by these four authors. Although such an overview is inevitably simplified, we feel that it gives a valuable insight into the different ways in which the term alienation was used by these four important philosophers.

Table 2.1 Influencing factors and types of alienation, according to Hegel, Marx, Fromm, and Marcuse

Author	Factor influencing alienation	Type of alienation	
Hegel	Self-struggle/development of spirit	1.	Spiritual alienation type 1: alienation as a condition of separation
		2.	Spiritual alienation type 2: alienation as a transfer of rights
Marx	Capitalism → private property/division of labor	1.	Alienation from the product of labor
		2.	Alienation from the production process
		3.	Self-alienation
		4.	Man-to-man alienation
Fromm	Capitalism → bureaucratization/division of labor	1.	Alienation of the civil servant from (a) himself, (b) his work and (c) his citizens
	Capitalism → high competition and small total value	2.	Alienation of the owner of the organization
	Capitalism → increased consumption	3.	Alienation from consumption
	Capitalism → focus on socioeconomic role	4.	Self-alienation
Marcuse	Advanced industrial society → false needs/technology/no room for critical thought	1.	Alienation from society
		2.	Artistic alienation
		3.	Self-alienation
		4.	Man-to-man alienation

In this study, the concept of alienation will be applied to the public domain, where public professionals implement public policies. As such, we need to explore the relationship between alienation, the nature of the public sector, and public policies. In this chapter, we have started this exploration. First, we examined how bureaucratic features (which are prevalent in the public domain) can give rise to alienation. Max Weber noted that the rationalizing elements of a bureaucracy can give rise to alienation. Applying rationality reduces transactions to a number of essential parts, each of which could be carried out by a single person. Related to this, Robert Merton argued that bureaucratic features can give rise to a 'bureaucratic personality', a concept which has close links to the alienation concept (B. Bozeman & Rainey, 1998). Finally, we turned our attention from the more general bureaucratic features to an important aspect of the public sector: policy implementation by street-level bureaucrats. Michael Lipsky wrote extensively on this subject, arguing that street-level work

is alienating. He stresses classical features of work alienation, such as being unable to control the pace of work and working only on segments of the product.

Based on these analyses, we can conclude that the concepts of alienation, bureaucracy, and policy implementation are inherently connected. In the next chapter, we will dive deeper into the relationship between policy implementation and alienation by developing the concept of policy alienation. This concept builds upon the classic alienation literature, by stressing typical features such as powerlessness and meaninglessness. However, it focuses on alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. This is in contrast to, for instance, Lipsky, who focused on the *work* alienation of street-level bureaucrats. Policy alienation is subjective, that is, it concerns alienation as perceived by the worker. That is, workers can feel alienated, an idea in line with Hegel and other, more contemporary, scholars (Hardimon, 1994:133). Marx, on the other hand, studied objective alienation: workers are alienated because they do not own the means of production. In the next chapter, we start by examining the contemporary use of alienation in the sociology of work and organization fields, and combine this with public administration literature to develop the concept of policy alienation.

3

DEVELOPING THE POLICY ALIENATION FRAMEWORK: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Abstract

Today, many public professionals feel estranged from the policy programs they implement; that is, they experience 'policy alienation'. This is of concern as, for satisfactory implementation, some identification with the policy is required. We conceptualize policy alienation based on the sociological concept of work alienation, and show how this can be used in policy implementation research. Studying a Dutch case of professionals implementing a new work disability decree, we observe how NPM practices increase policy alienation because of a perceived dysfunctional focus on efficiency and results. A large number of policy changes and stricter implementation rules further increased policy alienation.

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Dutch government changed the law regarding welfare benefits for disabled citizens. The main reason was the large increase in the number of recipients to approximately 10% of the Dutch workforce. A new set of rules was implemented by the Dutch organization for employees' insurance (UWV)[1]. According to these new stricter rules, existing recipients were reassessed, resulting in 110,000 recipients losing their benefits. Many of the insurance physicians involved encountered substantial professional and moral issues with the reassessments. About 240 physicians urged a strike against this new policy, and some decided to simply quit (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005). The following quote by an insurance physician is illustrative (Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005:3):

> *"The UWV is nowadays called the Lourdes of the North: you visit the agency as work-disabled, you leave able to work... It is becoming extremely controversial. I cannot reconcile it with my conscience anymore. I have sworn an oath which comes down to protecting the weak."*

This example is not unique: public professionals often appear to have difficulties identifying with policy programs they have to implement. Research shows that public professionals are experiencing increasing pressure as they have to consider several output performance norms which often conflict with their own professional standards or with the demands of increasingly empowered clients. Several studies show an increasing discontent among public professionals (Hebson, Grimshaw, & Marchington, 2003; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996).

In this article, we will analyze this discontent in terms of 'policy alienation', thereby elaborating on the concept of work alienation developed in the field of sociology of work and labor (for example Blauner, 1964). We define policy alienation as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented, here by a public professional who regularly interacts directly with clients.

Studying the policy alienation of public professionals and its causes is not only theoretically interesting (due to its links with policy implementation), it is also vital for policymakers. Policy alienation does not only influence the effectiveness of a policy program (Sabatier, 1986), it will also affect the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens, which may eventually influence the output legitimacy of government (Bekkers et al., 2007). By

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[1] Abbreviations are explained at the end of this article.

applying the policy alienation perspective, we can also enhance understanding on how New Public Management (NPM) is experienced by professionals implementing policies. Ackroyd et al. (2007:9) note the dearth of systematic studies on the effects of NPM restructuring. In particular, there are few studies on the NPM experiences of (street-level) professionals. Using the policy alienation perspective, we can examine what really happens on 'the work floor'.

This brings us to the three objectives of this article. Firstly, in Section 2, we will conceptualize policy alienation and investigate the factors that influence it. Secondly, in Section 3, we will test and elaborate the developed framework in an exploratory case study, in which the attitudes of insurance physicians and labor experts, who have to implement these new work disability rules, are studied. Thirdly, we will draw some conclusions, focusing primarily on policy alienation in an NPM context.

3.2   A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY ALIENATION

In this section, we concentrate on the first research objective: conceptualising policy alienation and the factors that influence it.

3.2.1   From work alienation to policy alienation

The intellectual roots of the alienation concept are found in the work of Karl Marx (1961 [1844]), who focused on objective work alienation: workers are alienated when they do not own the means of production or the resulting product. Most contemporary sociologists writing on alienation draw on Marx (Blauner, 1964; Seeman, 1959; Shepard, 1971) although, in contrast to Marx, they focus on *subjective* work alienation: alienation as perceived by the worker (Kanungo, 1982:19).

Sociologists have used the (subjective) alienation concept in various studies (Seeman, 1959:783) and this has resulted in a number of meanings being attributed to the concept (Kanungo, 1982:24). Seeman (1959:783) differentiated these meanings into various alienation dimensions. Blauner (1964) used Seeman's classification, and devised operational measures for three alienation dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness and social isolation.

In the public administration literature, the concept of work alienation has not gone unnoticed. A number of scholars have used the concept, drawing on the alienation literature developed in both sociology and psychology. Pandey and Kingsley (2000, see also DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005), for instance, have shown that work alienation is a strong predictor of the degree of red tape public employees experience.

In our study, however, we focus our attention on policy alienation rather than work alienation. How can the concept of alienation be linked to the

world of policy implementation? Public policies refer to the binding allocation of values, for society as a whole, in a situation of structural scarcity due, for example, to a lack of financial or natural resources (Easton, 1965). As a result, trade-offs occur between these values, for example between efficiency and equity (Stone, 2003). This is why street-level bureaucrats are able to make their own judgment on the appropriate trade-off when applying a policy to an individual case, such as when a police officer decides whether to impose an on-the-spot fine (Lipsky, 1980). When professional case workers have to implement a policy, many such trade-offs will occur. These public professionals, as members of professional communities or associations, also have to deal with professional norms and standards. We will focus on the alienation that public professionals experience in implementing policy in such a situation.

As stated, we define policy alienation as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented, here by a public professional who regularly interacts directly with clients. This *policy* alienation concept differs in three important aspects from *work* alienation. First, it looks at alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. Second, it focuses on the public sector, whereas the work alienation concept was primarily developed for the private sector. Third, it considers professionals, whereas the work alienation concept predominantly focuses on manual workers.

Having given a definition of the concept, our next step is to define its dimensions based on Blauner's ideas concerning work alienation. As with work alienation, policy alienation is seen as a multidimensional concept.

3.2.2 Policy powerlessness

Seeman (1959:784) defines powerlessness as "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks". That is, powerless workers feel themselves to be objects controlled and manipulated by others or by an impersonal system. Blauner (1964:16) discerned four 'modes' of powerlessness: (1) separation from ownership of the means of production and the resulting product; (2) the inability to influence general managerial policies; (3) the lack of control over employment conditions; and (4) the lack of control over the immediate work process.

We can apply these four modes in distinguishing between three levels of policy powerlessness. In the realm of policy making and implementation, powerlessness relates to the degree of influence public professionals have in shaping the policy program they have to implement. This influence may be exercised on strategic (Blauner's second mode), tactical (Blauner's third mode)

or operational levels (Blauner's fourth mode). The first of Blauner's modes is not relevant here because it concerns objective alienation, whereas we focus on subjective alienation.

If they have little influence on the strategic policy level, professionals will likely experience feelings of powerlessness. This can occur, for example, when a new policy is drafted without the help of the professionals who have to implement it.

The tactical level refers to the professionals' perceived influence on decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within their organization. This relates to how policy goals are transformed into specific performance requirements, which the organization has to meet, as well as to how resources (staff, budgets etc.) are allocated among the organization's units in order to meet these goals. In many agencies, performance management systems have been introduced to manage the implementation of policy programs despite several studies having shown that these systems can have undesirable effects when output criteria become more important than societal outcomes (P. Smith, 1995; Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). The more that professionals can effectively address these perverse effects at the agency level, the less they will experience powerlessness.

Lacking significant control over the operational working process is another mode of powerlessness. In public administration literature, this is primarily described in terms of a civil servant's discretion in implementing policies when interacting with clients. That is, the implementer has some freedom in terms of the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards (Lipsky, 1980). The more discretion public professionals perceive when implementing a policy, the lower their feelings of powerlessness.

3.2.3 | Policy meaninglessness

The second dimension of alienation distinguished by Blauner is meaninglessness. In the work alienation literature, meaninglessness has been defined as "the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contribution to a larger purpose" (Sarros et al., 2002:304). According to Blauner (1964:23), work is more meaningful when someone (1) works on a unique and individual product; (2) works on a larger part of the product; or (3) is responsible for a larger part of the production process.

In the realm of policy making and implementation, meaninglessness refers to a professional's perception of the contribution the policy makes to a greater purpose. As with powerlessness, meaninglessness can occur at the strategic, tactical and operational levels.

At the strategic level, meaninglessness refers to a professional's perception that a policy program is not actually dealing with specific societal problems, or with the provision of desirable public goods and services, such as delivering financial protection and security.

At the tactical level, meaninglessness is based on the professional's perception of the agency's contribution in handling specific problems or delivering public goods. When agencies adopt managerial policies that focus on output goals that lack a clear relationship with specific societal goals, professionals are more likely to experience the policy as less meaningful. Finally, at the operational level, meaninglessness reflects the professionals' perceptions of the contributions their own activities make to dealing with concrete, individual cases, as manifestations of broader societal problems. For instance, are they really helping people? If this is not the case, they will probably experience policy meaninglessness.

3.2.4 Social isolation – Role conflicts

Blauner sees social isolation as the third dimension of work alienation. Social isolation is generally seen as lacking a sense of belonging to the organization in which you work, and being unable to identify with the organization. According to Blauner (1964:23), "membership in an industrial community involves commitment to the work role and loyalty to one or more centers of the work community. Isolation, on the other hand, means that the worker feels no sense of belonging in the work situation and is unable to identify with the organization."

Social isolation in relation to policy implementation is best analyzed using the notion of role conflicts. When implementing a policy, professionals experience demands based on various logics, which stress different values and norms, and have a legitimacy of their own (Freidson, 2001). Role conflicts arise when professionals perceive these demands to be incompatible. The social isolation concept looks specifically at the sense of belonging to one logic, that of the organization. In contrast, the role conflict concept acknowledges the multiple logics that a professional has to deal with when implementing a policy. For instance, when implementing a policy, it is vital that professionals not only identify with their organization, but also with the clients they treat.

We distinguish four different logics (cf. Freidson, 2001). First, the *institutional* logic referring to demands derived from policy contents; these are often laid down in formal rules and regulations, such as the policy goals to be achieved. Second, the *organizational* logic, which formulates a number of managerial demands that guide the proper implementation of the policy by the agency. Third, the *professional* logic, which expresses demands to be followed if

one is to act professionally as a member of a professional community. Fourth, the *client* logic that focuses on the demands and values that a citizen (very often as a client of public administration) advances and which reflect their personal situation and interests.

These logics can conflict with each other. For instance, when a public professional has the perception that certain rules have to be followed (institutional logic) but, in doing so, the needs of the individual client (client logic) cannot be fulfilled. Such role conflicts heighten the degree of policy alienation experienced by public professionals.

3.2.5 Factors possibly influencing policy alienation

The three dimensions of policy alienation can be influenced by several factors. Based on the public administration literature, the following two factors seem particularly relevant.

New Public Management

New Public Management (NPM) has become increasingly prevalent in the public sector (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). NPM can be defined as a broad set of management approaches and techniques, borrowed from the private sector, applied in the public sector (Hood, 1991). Hood and Peters (2004:268) comment that NPM is a loose term, and no two authors list exactly the same features. Nevertheless, we will use the widely cited overview developed by Hood (1991) to distinguish various components of NPM, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Components of NPM (Hood, 1991:4-5)

No.	Component
1	'Hands-on professional management' in the public sector
2	Explicit standards and measures of performance
3	Greater emphasis on output controls
4	Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector
5	Shift to greater competition in the public sector
6	Stress on private-sector styles of management practice
7	Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use

We expect certain NPM components to be especially important in explaining the degree of policy alienation experienced by public professionals. Although we focus on perceived dysfunctions, we accept that NPM also has several positive characteristics (Pollitt, 2003:38-41).

Firstly, we examine two overlapping components: the use of explicit standards and measures of performance (Component 2, referred to as

'performance management' from here on) and a greater emphasis on output controls (Component 3). A focus on output controls often requires public agencies, managers and employees to work according to performance targets (usually quantitative). Pollitt (2003:46) argues that this kind of performance management can 'lead to over-concentration on what is precisely quantifiable (for example costs, number of licenses issued) and an under-concentration on other aspects which are not so easily measured'. These quantifiable targets tend to focus on business values such as efficiency and results, and can take precedence over values such as equity, security and predictability. Public professionals may have difficulty accepting this changed trade-off in values which becomes manifest when implementing a policy program (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 2003). Emery and Giauque (2003:475) note that "to focus on only the economic logic of action poses problems for public agents. They have to set aside some other shared values in order to concentrate solely on 'measurement management'". On this basis, we would expect public professionals to experience greater policy meaninglessness when performance management and output controls are used in implementing policy.

Further, we expect public professionals to experience increased role conflicts when the use of performance management systems and output controls are increased. This is likely when the organizational logic strongly promotes values such as efficiency and results over other values such as professional autonomy (professional logic) and freedom of choice (client logic) (P. Smith, 1995). This has similarities with the meaninglessness dimension, although the influences on the two dimensions are not necessarily the same. For example, a professional can view the NPM values of efficiency and results as very meaningful, but still sense an increased role conflict if a client does not view them in the same favorable light.

These two NPM components can also curtail professional autonomy. Extensive performance management often involves strict internal instructions and managers feel increasing pressure to produce results. We would expect such developments to make it harder for professionals to use discretion. Therefore, we expect public professionals to experience greater policy powerlessness when performance management and output controls are used in implementing policy.

A second important element of NPM practices concerns the constant reorganization, and the associated downsizing, of public organizations. This has parallels with the fourth (the disaggregation of public sector units) and seventh components of NPM (stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use) (Hood, 1991:5). There is increasing pressure on public organizations to become 'lean' and this often involves significant downsizing. The remaining employees are in a weakened position relative to management, especially when

downsizing seems a never-ending process (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004:172). When a new policy is implemented in such a situation, we would expect professionals to be less able to influence decisions concerning the way the policy is carried out. Therefore, we expect public professionals to experience greater policy powerlessness when an agency is undergoing reorganization and downsizing.

3.2.6 ICT

Blauner (1964) saw technology as an important determinant of alienation. Today, ICT has substantially penetrated the fabric of public administration, especially in the execution of rules and service delivery (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Looking at the effects of ICT, Zuboff (1988) differentiates between automating and informating ICT. The first is where technology "enables the same processes to be performed with more continuity and control" (1988:9). Automating presupposes formalization and standardization of the working processes. These developments can reduce the discretion of public professionals in implementing a policy (Bovens & Zouridis, 2002). Thus, we would expect that the more that automating ICT is used when implementing a policy, the more the public professional experiences policy powerlessness.

Alternatively, technology can "generate information about the underlying productive and administrative processes through which an organization accomplishes its work" (1988:9). With the informating capacities of ICT, a professional is able to develop new skills and acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the cases personally handled. This may diminish the sense of meaninglessness. We therefore expect that the more that informating ICT is used when implementing a policy, the less public professionals will experience policy meaninglessness.

3.3 A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the previous exploration, we have developed the theoretical framework shown in Figure 3.1.
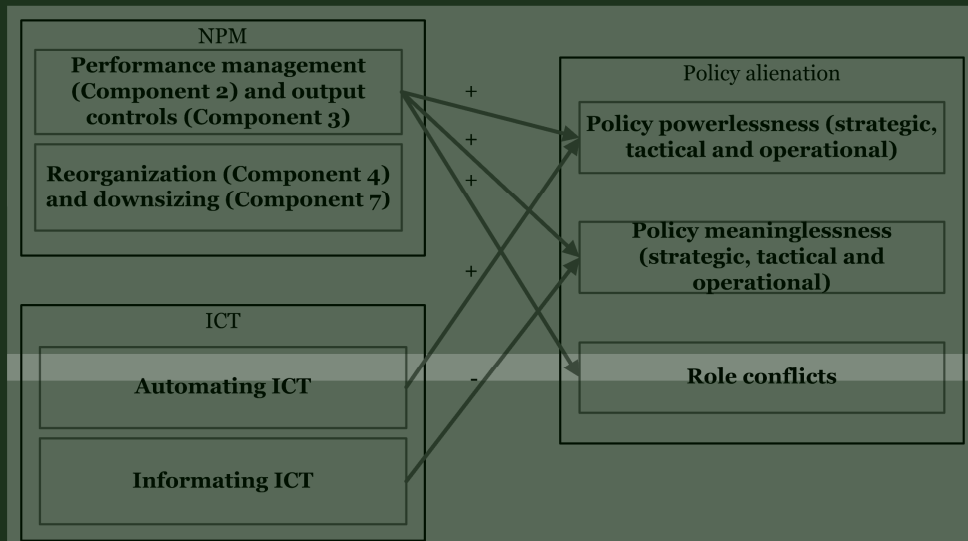
Figure 3.1 Theoretical framework: important factors influencing policy alienation dimensions

We can draw two main conclusions from this model. Firstly, we should consider policy alienation as a multidimensional concept, consisting of policy powerlessness, policy meaninglessness and role conflicts. Secondly, we should expect NPM components and ICT usage to influence the level of policy alienation in all three dimensions.

3.4 POLICY ALIENATION OF DUTCH INSURANCE PHYSICIANS AND LABOR EXPERTS

3.4.1 Method

The second objective of this research was to empirically test and elaborate the theoretical framework. To this end, we conducted an exploratory case study (Yin, 2003:9). The study is *exploratory* in the sense that the available literature and existing knowledge base on policy alienation are poor. It is a *case* study since we investigate 'how' and 'why' questions (how can policy alienation be understood and why does it occur) in a contemporary setting over which we have no control. This exploratory case study will provide insights into the phenomenon and enable us to make *theoretical* generalizations. In this way, a more substantive theory of policy alienation can be constructed.

The implementation of a new work disability decree in the Netherlands was seen as a relevant policy program, and one in which two groups of professionals – physicians and labor experts – play an important role. These groups are similar as, firstly, they operate in the same institutional context and implement the same policy, although their precise tasks differ (Berendsen,

2007). Secondly, they both work for the same organization (the UWV). Thirdly, they are confronted with the same clients (claimants of welfare payments). Given these similarities, we follow a 'most similar cases design' (Lijphart, 1975), which is also appropriate when the available literature and existing knowledge base are poor.

Further, in order to gain an in-depth reliable insight we used data triangulation (Yin, 2003). We conducted an extensive document analysis, involving relevant policy documentation, professional magazines, newspaper articles and websites. Further, seven semi-structured interviews with individual insurance physicians and labor experts were held. We checked the validity of our reconstruction by presenting the preliminary results to a member of the executive board of each of the four involved professional associations - two for the physicians and two for the labor experts. The semi-structured interviews, as well as the document study, focused on the way physicians and labor experts perceived the implementation of the new rules in terms of policy alienation, and the factors that led to these perceptions.

3.4.2 Background

In 2004, the Dutch government drafted new, stricter rules regarding welfare benefits for citizens with work disabilities. The so-called adjusted assessment decree (ASB), which was implemented in October 2004, changed the insurance conditions for people already receiving work disability benefits. Together with a new law on work and income, the ASB aimed to save a total of €2 billion per year (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2005). In practice, the ASB is implemented through programs run by the Dutch Institute for Employees' Insurance (UWV), a semi-autonomous agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

Within the UWV, insurance physicians and labor experts are involved in implementing the ASB. The physicians "provide social-medical evaluations with respect to the legislation concerning sick leave and employee disability" (Berendsen, 2007:225). The labor experts consider the claimant's options within the labor market based on the insurance physicians' medical report.

3.4.3 Manifestations of policy alienation

A report in 2005 by the physicians' main professional association (NVVG) gave indications of the possible alienation of insurance physicians . The reason for writing the report was "the media commotion concerning the working experiences of physicians re-examining claimants within the framework of the ASB" (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005:6). The NVVG sent a questionnaire to a random 25% of their members and 98 usable surveys were returned (69 per

cent response rate). One question in the survey was whether the respondents found it appropriate to change the insurance conditions for those who were already receiving a benefit based on work disability. To this question, 52 per cent answered 'yes' and 48 per cent 'no'. Clearly, a substantial proportion of the physicians did not fully agree with the policy, an indication of policy alienation. Other data also revealed physicians feeling psychologically disconnected from the ASB (Kammer, 2005; SRA, 2005; UWV, 2005). As one interviewed insurance physician stated:

> *"What I think is wrong [about the ASB], is that the Legislator has become very unreliable. It is of course very frustrating when you first tell people they are work disabled, then you do nothing for 5-10 years, and then suddenly you give them the message: we have altered the insurance conditions - from tomorrow, you are no longer work disabled. These people had the impression that they could not work, and have adapted their lives. They will never be able to get a job."*

However, other physicians disagreed. For example, another interviewed physician stated that, "in my position as a chief insurance physician […], I have embraced the ASB". Thus, perhaps the best term to apply to the implementation of the ASB is controversial, with diverging opinions amongst the physicians.

With respect to the labor experts, a similar impression arises. Several sources indicate that many labor experts have problems with the ASB (Kammer, 2005; SRA, 2005; UWV, 2005). An interviewed board member of a professional association of labor experts expressed this general feeling:

> *"A very large number of labor experts did not agree with this policy. They say, this is too strict, too rigid. I agree with this. First people were fully work disabled; now they are fully able to work. Only because government changed the rules."*

To sum up, we can say that there are several manifestations of policy alienation by both insurance physicians and labor experts. The next step in our analysis is to expand on this by framing the case using the three dimensions of policy alienation. At the same time, we can explore the factors influencing these dimensions.

3.4.4 Policy powerlessness

Powerlessness refers to the influence (or rather lack of) that public professionals have to shape the policy program at different policy levels. Have insurance physicians and labor experts experienced powerlessness and, if so, which factors influenced this?

Strategic level

With respect to powerlessness at the strategic level, we have found hardly any evidence that physicians or labor experts were able to influence the shaping of the ASB. To do so, it would have been necessary to mobilize their professional associations and, although they tried, they did not see any results (UWV, 2005:4). The main professional associations of the physicians, the NVVG and the UWVA, did not become involved in the political debate concerning the drafting of the new rules (WAOcafé, 2005a). Similarly, the professional associations of the labor experts – SRA and NVVA - did not intervene. As a result, many physicians and labor experts became frustrated with the lack of influence of their professional associations in shaping the ASB, and this contributes to feelings of powerlessness.

This feeling of powerlessness was further increased as the UWV did not see it as its task to intervene in the political debate, even though its management knew that many professionals were complaining that the UWV was blindly accepting what the government was asking them to implement (Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005).

Tactical level

At the tactical level, the reorganization that created the UWV was a factor that negatively affected the position of professionals since they could no longer effectively influence decisions concerning the way the policy was implemented. The UWV was established in 2002 through a merger of six organisations implementing different social security programs in order to create a 'lean' and more integrated organization at the implementation level. The relationship between the newly formed UWV and the Ministry is based on a contract form of governance, in which results and costs play an important role. As the six organizations merged, the task of reintegrating the former work-disabled people was effectively privatized.

This reorganization can be framed in terms of NPM, with the results orientation a concretization of the third NPM component - emphasis on output controls. The contract-based form of governance places the UWV 'at arms-length' (Component 4). The privatization of the reintegration task is a shift towards marketization/competition (Component 5). Finally, the focus on cost

reduction, through downsizing, resembles the seventh component – stress on greater discipline in resource use.

Following this reorganization, several problems emerged. First, according to many employees, the UWV is "a Moloch [monster] with which people have difficulty identifying" (Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005:3). Second, since cost reduction was a major objective in the reorganization, almost 10,000 people have had to find another job. A third factor is that the UWV is perceived of as very hierarchical (WAOcafé, 2005b).

Given these circumstances, professionals within the UWV are in a weak position. This made it very difficult for the professionals to influence the way new policies, here the ASB, were implemented. An interviewed physician stated:

> *"We could not influence the policy very much. That is clear. The UWV is a top-down administrative organization focused on administrative processes. The professionals re-examining the clients are not the priority of the UWV. We were not consulted about the implementation conditions regarding the ASB."*

Operational level

The new rules substantially changed the discretion available to the physicians and labor experts. Many physicians perceived their level of discretion to have decreased (Kammer, 2005). A survey by the NVVG drew the same conclusion: 63 per cent of the respondents answered 'yes' to the question whether they felt their professional autonomy was lower than it should be. Important reasons given were the strict internal UWV performance criteria plus the managerial focus on results, both associated with the ASB (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005). Thus, these overlapping NPM components did decrease discretion, as we hypothesized in the theoretical framework. However, this feeling was not universal. One physician had commented that he could still make decisions 'in all freedom' (WAOcafé, 2006a). Further, some physicians who initially experienced reduced discretion have since accepted the situation. As one interviewed physician stated:

> *"In the beginning, I had a strong feeling that I was being constrained, in the sense that I had to increasingly justify my decisions. Even when someone could do almost nothing, I still had to send them to a labor expert. That was the biggest problem for me but, know I am used to it; I do not have problems with it anymore."*

The introduction of a new ICT system was particularly relevant in terms of the operational powerlessness of the labor experts. For more than ten years, labor experts had used a database, containing more than 7,000 job descriptions, to distil possible job profiles. A new system was introduced in 2001, which was both less automating and more informating (Van der Hart & Moekoet, 2003). This was expected to increase the discretion of the labor experts but, with the ASB implementation, the opposite occurred. Managers, who were experiencing increased pressure to produce results, used the ICT system to limit the discretion of the labor experts. The following quote by a labor expert, looking at the interaction of the managerial NPM practices (Components 2 and 3) and the ICT system, illustrates this (cited in LVA, 2006:5):

> *"The new system is subjective. The labor expert has more freedom to choose. There is more room for interpretation. This can go two ways. Pressure was increased by management to find more, and better paid, jobs suitable for the client and consequently to lower their disability percentage. This was the reason I came into conflict with the organization."*

Overall, the discretion of the labor experts seems to have decreased more than that of the insurance physicians although both generally experience less discretion. The physician's discretion in their core task – providing social-medical evaluations – did not change significantly, whereas, for the labor experts, their discretion over actual work content did (Bannink, Lettinga, & Heyse, 2006). The combination of NPM practices and a new computer system significantly reduced the discretion open to the labor experts, turning them increasingly into screen-level bureaucrats.

Concluding, many physicians and labor experts did experience feelings of powerlessness in implementing the new insurance regulations - on strategic, tactical and operational levels.

3.4.5 Policy meaninglessness

Here, meaninglessness is in terms of the professionals' perceptions regarding the policy's contribution to a larger purpose. This can be on three levels.

Strategic level

The official objective of the ASB is to increase participation in work by the disabled by looking at a person's potential rather than their limitations (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2005). Two arguments stressed in justifying this are, firstly, that it is nearly always healthier for people with

physical or psychological problems to be active and, secondly, that Dutch social security has become too expensive and money has to be saved.

In many eyes, the economic goal of the ASB seems to dominate. As one physician put it: "I see it more as a cost savings policy than a method to get people in work" (WAOcafé, 2006a). If this is true, then NPM-based considerations would seem to dominate in the trade-off of values in the ASB implementation, leading to a shift in value orientation: a move not welcomed by most physicians and labor experts (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; WAOcafé, 2006a). This can be seen as a concretization of the seventh component of NPM: a greater discipline in resource use (Hood, 1991).

Another factor contributing to strategic meaninglessness, as witnessed by our respondents, was the multitude of policy changes regarding work disability. Between 2002 and 2006, major policy changes included the 'Gatekeeper Improvement Act', the ASB and a new law on work and income. Before labor experts and physicians were able to work out what one policy meant for their work, there was already another policy to implement. Such a situation contributes to feelings of strategic meaninglessness. As one physician put it:

> *"Lately there have been so many changes. First the adjustments to the ASB, now the law regarding work and income. It happens all the time. I do not feel 'connected' with politicians. Often they propose things which are not well thought out, and which have to be implemented right away."*

One aspect of the ASB, which many professionals did agree with, was the fact that almost everyone receiving a work disability benefit had to be re-examined. Many claimants who were re-examined had not been examined for years, and so it became possible to assess changes in their condition, as well as remedy any previous judgmental errors. Almost all our respondents (six out of seven) explicitly welcomed this. As one labor expert put it:

> *"A positive aspect was the 'cleaning of the databases'. Previously, some professionals had implemented the rules very liberally, and some clients had been unjustifiably labeled work disabled, and this could now be remedied."*

Tactical level

On the tactical level, meaninglessness reflects a professional's perception of the contribution their agency makes in handling specific problems or delivering public goods.

The UWV had to implement the ASB and, in a short period, more than 325,000 people had to be re-examined. To achieve this, the UWV focused primarily on the number of re-examinations completed, thereby using strict performance criteria (NPM Component 2) and a focus on results (Component 3). While most professionals agreed with re-examination in theory, the strict quantitative performance criteria associated with this process had some unwelcome consequences. Most importantly, the UWV had to recruit external physicians and labor experts, often inexperienced, to cope with the increased workload. Almost all the respondents disagreed with this practice. As one explained:

> *"What really bothers us [insurance physicians, LT] is that, owing to a shortage of re-examination capacity, physicians are brought in from outside. These physicians often do not know what they are talking about. They just have an interest in finishing as many cases as possible a day. The quality they deliver is really unsatisfactory."*

Operational level

On the operational level, meaninglessness refers to the professionals' perceptions of their own contribution to dealing with concrete, individual cases. Many physicians and labor experts did not expect the vast majority of former work-disabled people to find work (LVA, 2006). For a start, two-thirds of the claimants re-examined stated that their situation had deteriorated over time (Deursen, Van der Burg, & Veldhuis, 2007:7). As one physician commented (cited in Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005):

> *"I cannot put my signature to a medical evaluation which inevitably results in state assistance for the person...someone who is unemployed for ten years, and searching for a job again, that is impossible. The statements by the Social Economic Council (SER) are right: they state that you shouldn't construct the ASB."*

However, not all shared this view: a number of respondents stressed that being labelled as work-disabled for a very long time, especially for younger claimants,

is detrimental to their health. This is in line with the first argument behind the ASB: that it is healthier for people to be active.

Secondly, for some professionals, it was significant that the UWV was no longer responsible for the reintegration of former claimants. Documents (UWV, 2005:7) – supported by the interviews – show that the labor experts in particular perceive this as an impoverishment of their service. This feeling seems to be linked with the view of many that cost reduction (NPM Component 7) is the main goal of the ASB and the newly established UWV, not getting people back to work. This makes it harder for the individual labor experts to see themselves as contributing to the wellbeing of the client.

Overall, we conclude that many physicians and labor experts question the meaningfulness of the policy: on strategic, tactical and operational levels. This perceived meaninglessness also resulted in increased role conflicts, as described below.

3.4.6 Role conflicts

Two role conflicts are seen as contributing to the policy alienation felt by the involved public professionals.

Institutional-client conflict

The first role conflict emerges from the tension between the rules of the ASB (institutional logic) and the demands of the claimants (client logic). As noted, both physicians and labor experts are doubtful that the reassessment of claimants actually contributes to the ASB's claimed goal of increasing work participation. Moreover, even where professionals do see their role as meaningful in that benefits are being reduced -for example, for younger claimants- this does not necessarily decrease the sense of role conflict. In our study, all the interviewed physicians experienced some degree of institutional-client conflict. As one put it:

> *"What you notice is that clients are re-examined using today's norms. … Nowadays, there is a lot more emphasis on re-activating the clients. A direct result is that the financial status of the clients changes [their disability benefit is reduced]. That has a considerable social impact on these clients."*

For labor experts, this role conflict is particularly relevant. They have to tell the clients if their work-disability benefit is going to be reduced, and this intensifies the role conflict because the clients often blame the labor expert directly for

their reduced benefit: "Now that the social safety net is reduced, labor experts will more often have the role of a bringer of bad news. The UWV recently received threatening letters, showing that labor experts risk being the scapegoats of the re-examinations" (Hagoort, 2004a:4). The interviewed labor experts themselves experience this, sometimes to an extreme degree. One labor expert stated that some clients ask him how he can implement such a decree. Others said that some of their colleagues had been threatened by clients.

Organizational-professional conflict

A second role conflict emerges from the tension between the managerial demands (organizational logic) and the professional norms (professional logic). Managers want the work to be done as efficiently as possible: "they have a strong faith in figures" (Berendsen, 2007:227). They focus on output, mainly on the number of re-examinations a professional completes, using strict performance criteria. Clearly, the NPM components of performance management and output control are present in their mindsets. The physicians and labor experts, on the other hand, often want to retain their own professional norms. As one physician put it, "there is clearly a culture of repression. Management does not understand that physicians need time. Tensions arise when physicians want to work accurately and managers tell them that they have to do fifteen re-examinations a week". This feeling is, however, not universal; some respondents stated that they could cope effectively with this role conflict by communicating with their manager.

3.5 Conclusions

In this article, we have conceptualized policy alienation and tried to understand the factors that influence it by building a theoretical framework. This framework was elaborated through an exploratory case study involving Dutch insurance physicians and labor experts implementing a new work disability decree (ASB). The results of the case study are shown in Figure 3.2:
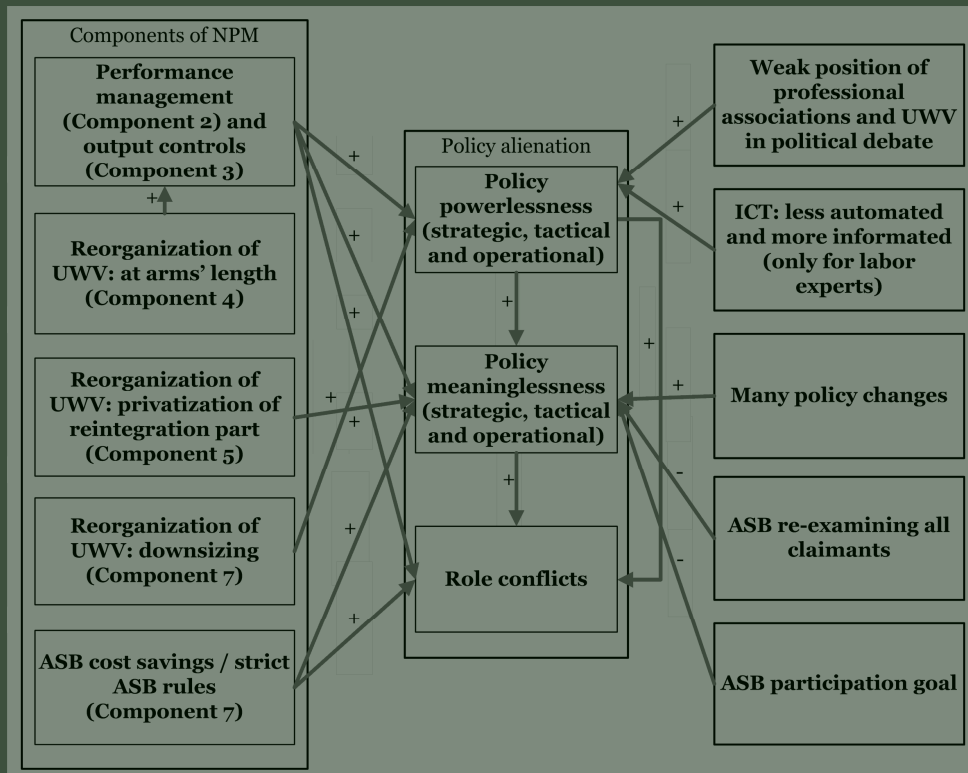
Figure 3.2 Factors from the ASB policy influencing the degree of policy alienation felt by insurance physicians and labor experts.

The Figure emphasizes how the various policy alienation dimensions influence each other. For example, when professionals experience low discretion, they feel less able to effectively cope with role conflicts.

Further, we see that a number of factors influence these dimensions for both groups of professionals. The weak position of the UWV, and of the professional associations, in the political debate contributed to the feeling of many physicians and labor experts that they were powerless. Moreover, the many policy changes increased the sense of policy meaningless for many professionals. Re-examining claimants who had not been examined for many years was, however, generally seen as meaningful. Further, the participation in work goal was generally seen as meaningful, especially for younger claimants.

For the labor experts, the use of a new ICT system was also relevant. The combination of a more informating and less automating new system with management pressure to produce results significantly reduced the labor experts' discretion, turning them increasingly into screen-level bureaucrats.

Nevertheless, the most important factors in explaining the policy alienation seemed to be components of NPM. As such, we can apply the policy alienation framework to enhance knowledge on how NPM is experienced on 'the work floor' by professionals implementing policies. We see this as a clear

contribution that the policy alienation framework can make to the field of public management, and now focus on this aspect.

As Pollitt (2003:32) notes, "the overall picture is likely to be complicated – NPM has eight or nine different elements, and each of these may work well or badly and may generate additional, unforeseen or unwanted effects". In our empirical analysis, we saw that a number of the NPM components influenced the experiences of professionals in terms of policy alienation. One should not forget, however, that we were primarily looking at perceived dysfunctions of NPM, and therefore largely ignored its positive side.

Firstly, NPM-based performance management and output controls influenced all three dimensions of policy alienation. As hypothesized, many professionals experienced increased powerlessness, meaninglessness and role conflicts. These feelings were, however, not universal. For instance, some respondents stated that they could effectively cope with the role conflict by communicating with their manager. In this way, management can act as a buffer for the strict performance criteria. It is therefore unwarranted to blame management for all the problems associated with quantitative performance management and output criteria. This relationship between management and professionals should be explored further, examining how management and professionals interact in NPM contexts.

Further, we observed the consequences of a major reorganization on the degree of policy alienation experienced. One element of this reorganization was the privatization of the reintegration of those formerly declared as work-disabled. Implementing the ASB, which only focused on the re-examinations, was therefore seen as less meaningful than their previous function by many labor experts, leading to motivational problems. So, in addition to a separation of related public tasks making it harder to achieve an integrated service (Pollitt, 2003:48), we observe that it can also lead to a greater sense of policy alienation by professionals, and possibly to motivational problems.

A second element of the reorganization was that almost 10,000 UWV employees were to be dismissed. A number of authors (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 2003) state that downsizing, in combination with increased performance management, can lead to a lowering of the public service ethic, as employees become more instrumental and calculating in their attitudes. However, in our study, this did not seem to have taken place: many physicians and labor experts had moral and professional problems with the ASB and the reorganization precisely because they wanted to serve their clients properly. They did not seem to have become more instrumental or calculating in their attitudes, by, for example, re-examining the clients less rigorously.

Finally, we observed that the ASB goal of cost reduction, and the related stricter rules, increased the degree of meaninglessness and role conflicts experienced by many, but not all, professionals. Some professionals did agree with this cost-cutting goal, agreeing that the social security system had become too expensive. As with other factors influencing policy alienation, we see that not all professionals experience them in the same way. While the factors included in our model can explain why feelings of policy alienation have evolved, they do not explain why some public professionals feel more alienated than others. More research is needed to explain why this is so.

Concluding, our research shows that the policy alienation concept can be valuable in explaining the problems experienced by public professionals when implementing a policy, especially in an NPM context. Additional research is needed to explore the concept further both empirically and theoretically.

APPENDIX: ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Dutch expansion	English explanation
ASB	Aangepast schattingsbesluit	Adjusted assessment decree
NRC	NRC Handelsblad	A leading daily newspaper
NVVA	Nederlandse vereniging van arbeidsdeskundigen	General association for labor experts
NVVG	Nederlandse vereniging voor verzekeringsgeneeskunde	Association of insurance physicians
SRA	Stichting register arbeidsdeskundigen	Professional association of labor experts
SZW	Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
UWV	Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemers Verzekeringen	Organization for employees' insurance
UWVA	Vereniging van verzekeringsartsen werkzaam bij het UWV	Association of insurance physicians working at the UWV
WAOcafé	Internetplatform over arbeidsongeschiktheid	Web-based platform concerning work disability

4

POLICY ALIENATION: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF INSURANCE PHYSICIANS AND TEACHERS

ABSTRACT

Currently, there is an intense debate on the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery. Several studies show increasing discontent among professionals toward policies they have to implement. In this article, we aim to contribute to this topic by analyzing this discontent of public professionals in terms of 'policy alienation'. The policy alienation concept is used to frame the experiences of professionals in a coherent theoretical framework. We have used a qualitative comparative case study of Dutch insurance physicians and secondary school teachers to study the factors that influence the degree of policy alienation across different domains. Our article shows that facets of New Public Management are important in explaining the pressures on public professionals implementing public policies. However, others factors are also prominent, and the degree of the implementers' professionalism seems especially important. These insights help in understanding why public professionals embrace or resist the implementation of public policies.

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is an intense debate concerning professionals in the public sector (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Emery & Giauque, 2003; Hebson et al., 2003). Authors such as Duyvendak et al. (2006:35) and Freidson (2001) note that many of the pressures that professionals face are related to the difficulties they have with the policies they have to implement. For example, Bottery (1998:40), examining the pressures on professionals stemming from new policies in education and healthcare in Great Britain, cites a teacher arguing that: "The changes have been outrageous, and have produced a culture of meritocracy and high flyers. There's massive paperwork because the politicians don't believe teachers are to be trusted." A second example refers to the introduction of a new reimbursement policy (known as Diagnosis Related Groups, in Dutch 'Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, DBC's') in mental healthcare in the Netherlands. In one large-scale survey, as many as nine out of ten professionals wanted to abandon this new policy (Palm et al., 2008). Psychologists even went as far as to openly demonstrate on the street against this policy. A major reason for this was that many could not align their professional values with the content of the policy. Overall, several studies show an increasing discontent among public professionals toward public policies (see also Hebson et al., 2003; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996).

In this article, we want to contribute to this important topic. Our main goal is to identify those factors which determine the experiences of public professionals with the policies they have to implement. This is achieved using a qualitative comparative case study, which allows us to study whether the factors that influence the degree of policy alienation are similar across different public domains. This is theoretically relevant as it contributes to the debate on pressured professionals. Indeed, although scholars such as Exworthy and Halford (1998; see also Noordegraaf, 2007) note that there are a number of factors creating professional pressures, this has yet to be examined thoroughly on the level of actual policy implementation. We analyze this using two qualitative case studies, looking in detail at national, organizational, and policy factors.

We will analyze the relevance of these factors for professional pressure using the policy alienation framework. Policy alienation can be defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented, here by a public professional who regularly interacts directly with clients (Tummers, Bekkers, & Steijn, 2009). The policy alienation concept consists of five dimensions: strategic powerlessness, tactical powerlessness, operational powerlessness, societal meaninglessness, and client

meaninglessness. In this way, the policy alienation concept adds to the literature by framing the experiences of public professionals with new policies in a coherent theoretical framework. Indeed, although some prominent policy implementation scholars have emphasized the important role of implementers identifying with the policy (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), few have developed and applied a framework for analyzing this topic (O'Toole, 2000). Furthermore, although change management scholars have a long history of studying the role of willingness (or resistance) to a change (Judson, 1991; Lewin, 1951), little attention has been given to the way in which public employees react to new public policies, or the particularities in this context (Kickert, 2010). Concluding, this study is innovative in that, using a coherent theoretical framework, it comparatively analyses the factors influencing the experiences of public professionals with the policies they have to implement.

Studying the policy alienation of public professionals and the associated factors is not only of academic interest, it is also highly relevant for policymakers. Firstly, because, when implementers are unable to identify with a policy, this can negatively influence policy effectiveness and thereby organizational performance (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009). Secondly, a high degree of policy alienation can also affect the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens, which may eventually influence the output legitimacy of government (Bekkers et al., 2007). A better understanding of policy alienation and its determining factors in different contexts is important for policymakers if they want to develop policies which will be more readily accepted by implementing public professionals. We analyze the complex set of factors that influence the experiences of public professionals with policies, and derive a number of important factors. For instance, policymakers and managers can use the insights to consider what opportunities are open to them for increasing the commitment (or lowering the alienation) of public professionals implementing policies.

This brings us to the outline of this article. Section 2 conceptualizes policy alienation and examines factors that possibly influence its degree. Section 3 outlines the method and the results of the empirical analyses. In Section 4, we draw some conclusions by discussing the contribution of this article to the debate on public professionals and professionalism in the public sector.

4.2   A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF POLICY ALIENATION

This section firstly provides the background for the study on policy implementation by professionals by examining neoliberal reforms and their effects on professionals. We will then define the dimensions of policy alienation.

Finally, we will examine a number of factors that will possibly influence these dimensions.

4.2.1 Neo-liberalism, NPM, and the impact on professionals

The economic crises in the 1970s and 1980s and the collapse of the Communist bloc at the end of the 1980s, fuelled political opposition to state interventionism in favor of free market reform. As a result, there was a rise of neoliberalism in a number of countries (Clarke & Newman, 1997; Harvey, 2007). For instance, in the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher emphasized freer markets and less state intervention. She aimed to decrease government interference in the economy, including by privatizing nationally-owned enterprises.

Neoliberalism can briefly be described as "the idea that the market offers the best solutions to social problems and that governments' attempted solutions, in contrast, are inefficient and antithetical to the value of freedom" (Holland, Nonini, Lutz, & Bartlett, 2007:xi).The proponents of neoliberalism spearheaded programs for the modernization of government, such as denationalization, disaggregation of public-sector units, and more explicit performance measures (Le Grand, 2007). In these ways, the doctrine of neoliberalism led to a number of reforms under the label 'New Public Management' (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).

The rise of neoliberalism has had profound impacts on professionals working in the public sector (Noordegraaf, 2007). Neoliberalism, and its resulting policies, focus on business-like values, such as efficiency, transparency, and client choice. These values can dominate traditional professional values such as autonomy and equity. Next, the emphasis on the market and the individual can erode professional associations, which are used to organize knowledge creation and transfer (Freidson, 2001; Roberts, 2006). This challenges the expert-status of professionals, thereby weakening their power. Moreover, the intense use of performance indicators and audits requires professionals to significantly alter their behavior (Ball, 2003; Power, 1997). Examining education reforms introducing performance indicators and targets, Ball (2003:215) notes that "the novelty of this epidemic of reform is that it does not simply change what people, as educators, scholars and researchers do, it changes who they are". In more general terms, Marquand (2004:110) argues that "in virtually every institution, eighteen years of neoliberalism exalted managers, often recruited from the corporate sector, at the expense of the professionals who formed the backbone of the institution concerned". However, it would be unwarranted to claim that neoliberalism is viewed as negative for all professions under all circumstances. For instance, Noordegraaf (2007:763) notes that "Paradoxically, these very same evidence-based and outcome-

oriented movements are also used to professionalize quasi-, proto- or semiprofessional occupations, such as social work and nursing". However, we can confidently conclude that neoliberalism seem to strongly *affect* professionals and professional work.

4.2.2 Organizational performance and policy implementation

One of the results of the focus on neoliberalism and NPM is that the performance of public organizations, and its measurement, has become increasingly important. For instance, Hood (1991:4) notes that one of the doctrinal components of NPM is "explicit standards and measures of performance" and that "resource allocation and rewards [are] linked to measured performance". The organizational performance literature has examined a range of performance measures, such as profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction (Cameron, 1978; Chakravarthy, 1986). With the insight that there is no single ultimate performance indicator, but rather a need to balance a number of indicators, Kaplan and Norton (1992, following Schneiderman) developed the Business Balanced Scorecard. More recent works continue to stress the different components of organizational performance, and methods to measure them (Neely, 2008).

In public organizations, a number of indicators are used to measure performance. For public organizations on the frontline of public service, a major component of organizational performance is the effectiveness and efficiency with which they deliver public policies (Hill & Hupe, 2009). Policy implementation scholars note that implementers identifying with the policy is essential for policy effectiveness. For instance, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975, see also Ewalt & Jennings, 2004, May & Winter, 2009) note that:

> *"Implementation may fail because implementers refuse to do what they are supposed to do. Dispositional conflicts occur because subordinates reject the goals of their superiors ... for numerous reasons: they offend implementers' personal values or self-interest; or they alter features of the organization and its procedures that implementers desire to maintain."*

This brings us to the policy alienation framework used in this article that builds on policy implementation research by emphasizing the crucial role of implementers in achieving policy effectiveness, and thereby organizational performance. Our main assumption is that, the greater the policy alienation of professionals, the lower the policy effectiveness. This is rooted in the notion of policy implementation scholars that implementers identifying with the policy is

essential for policy effectiveness (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Policy alienation is a multidimensional concept, made up of two main dimensions: powerlessness and meaninglessness. In essence, powerlessness is a person's lack of control over events in their life. Meaninglessness, on the other hand, is the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contribution with a larger purpose. Professionals can feel powerless while implementing a policy, for example if they have no influence over the type, quantity, and quality of the sanctions and rewards they dispense (Lipsky, 1980). Further, it is also evident that professionals can feel that implementing a policy is meaningless if, for example, it fails to deliver any apparent benefits for society (Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). In making the dimensions more specific to the situation being studied, we distinguish between strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness, and between societal and client meaninglessness. The definitions of these dimensions are provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Operationalization of policy alienation: five dimensions

Dimension	Definition	An example situation leading to a high score
Strategic powerlessness	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as is captured in rules and regulations.	A professional feeling that the policy is drafted without the help of implementing professionals or professional associations.
Tactical powerlessness	The professionals' perceived influence on decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within their own organization.	Professionals stating that the managers in the organization did not consult them or their colleagues when designing the implementation process for the policy.
Operational powerlessness	The perceived degree of freedom in making choices concerning the sort, quantity, and quality of sanctions and rewards on offer when implementing the policy.	Answering 'fully agree' to a survey question on whether the professional feels that their autonomy during the implementation process was lower than it should be.
Societal meaninglessness	The perception of professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals.	Stating in an interview that 'I agree with the policy goal of enhancing transparency, but I do not see how this policy helps in achieving this goal.'
Client meaninglessness	The professionals' perceptions of the added value of them implementing a policy for their own clients.	A professional noting that a particular policy seriously impinges on their clients' privacy.

4.2.3 Factors influencing policy alienation

Policy alienation will be influenced by several factors and, based on public administration literature, the influence of New Public Management and the degree of professionalism of the profession under study seem particularly relevant.

New Public Management

As a consequence of neoliberal doctrines, New Public Management (NPM) has become prevalent in the public sector (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). NPM can be seen as encompassing a broad set of management approaches and techniques, borrowed from the private sector, and now applied in the public sector. Hood and Peters (2004:268) commented that NPM is a rather loose term with no two authors listing exactly the same features. Nevertheless, we will use the widely cited overview developed by Hood (1991) to discern various components of NPM:

Table 4.2 NPM components (Hood, 1991:4-5)

No.	Component
1	'Hands-on professional management' in the public sector
2	Explicit standards and measures of performance
3	Greater emphasis on output controls
4	Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector
5	Shift to greater competition in the public sector
6	Stress on private-sector styles of management practice
7	Stress on greater discipline and parsimony in resource use

In our view, two of these NPM components are especially important in explaining the degree of policy alienation: the use of explicit standards and measures of performance (Component 2), referred to as 'performance management' from here on; and the greater emphasis on output controls (Component 3).

As noted in the discussion on neoliberalism, a focus on output controls often requires public agencies, managers, and employees to relate their work to performance targets (usually quantitative). Pollitt (2003:46) argues that this kind of performance management can 'lead to over-concentration on what is precisely quantifiable (for example costs, number of licenses issued) and an under-concentration on other aspects which are not so easily measured'. These quantifiable targets tend to focus on efficiency and results, which can then take precedence over values such as equity and security. Public professionals may

have difficulty in accepting this changing trade-off in values that becomes manifest when implementing a policy program (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 2003). As such, we would expect public professionals to experience greater societal meaninglessness when performance management and output controls are used when implementing policy (see also Tummers et al., 2009).

Further, these two NPM components can also limit professional discretion, the reverse of operational powerlessness. Extensive performance management and output controls often involve strict internal instructions and will push managers to increase the pressure on staff in order to produce results. We expect such developments to make it harder for professionals to use their discretion. To summarize, we expect that public professionals will experience greater policy alienation when performance management and output controls are employed in implementing a policy.

Degree of professionalism

Besides the introduced elements of New Public Management, we also expect the degree of professionalism to influence policy alienation. Here, we follow Eraut (1994) and treat professionalism as an ideology, without attempting to distinguish 'true' professions from other contenders.

An important indicator of high professionalism is the existence of a strong professional association (Eraut, 1994). We would expect that such a body might influence the degree of policy alienation experienced by its members. Indeed, in the literature, the relationships that develop between professional associations and governments are considered crucial to the policymaking process as these professional associations can legitimize change by hosting a process of discourse through which change is debated and endorsed (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002).

We can relate this to the policy implementation process. The relationship between 'government' and professional associations is based on a principle of reciprocal return. Governments, for example, can ill-afford to develop policies that will be met with criticism from professionals and so, when professional associations are sufficiently powerful, they can significantly influence policies. However, if professional associations are not considered crucial for the implementation process, they might be bypassed by policy developers. As a result, on a strategic level, professionals might feel powerless and will therefore be alienated from the policy. Based on this argument, we anticipate that, the stronger the professional association, the less strategic powerlessness will be experienced by the implementing professionals.

The status of the professional group can be considered as another indicator of professionalism. We expect that professions with a relatively low

status – such as school teachers and social workers – will have greater difficulty in retaining discretion when implementing a policy. Related to this, Bucher and Stelling (1969:4) argue that "the reward [for professional status] is autonomy and influence: the group is accorded the competence to define problems, determine solutions and monitor the functioning of the system". Thus, overall, we would expect public professionals to experience less policy alienation when (a) professional associations are stronger and/or (b) their profession has a higher status.

Based on the above exploration, we have developed the theoretical framework on policy alienation and its factors shown in Figure .
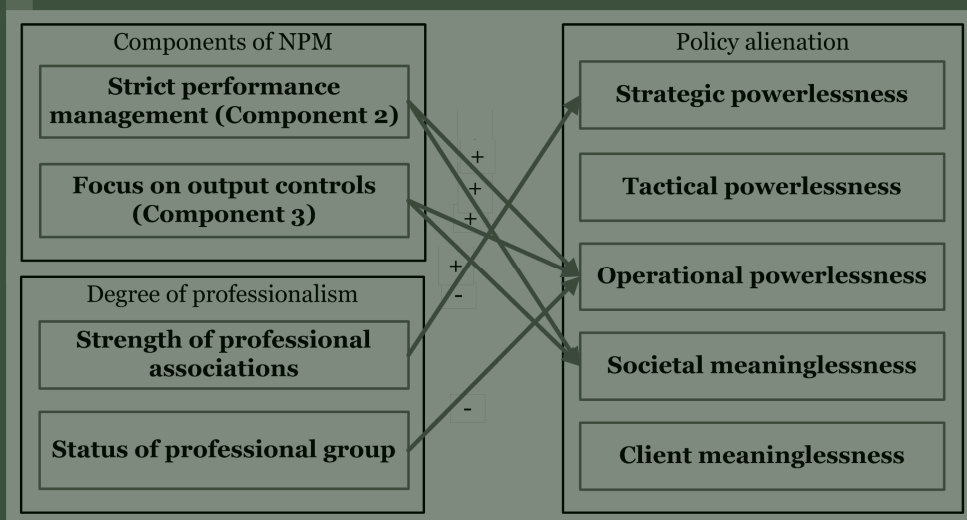
Figure 4.1 Theoretical framework: factors influencing policy alienation dimensions

4.3 COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF INSURANCE PHYSICIANS AND TEACHERS

4.3.1 Method

The main goal of this article is to examine which factors determine the experiences of public professionals with the policies they have to implement. We use the policy alienation framework to study these experiences. As a method, a qualitative comparative case study is used which allows us to study whether the factors that influence the degree of policy alienation are similar in different public domains.

The two cases, both in the Netherlands, discussed in this article are of insurance physicians, implementing the new so-called work disability decree, and of secondary school teachers implementing the 'Second Phase'. These were both substantial reforms which considerably affected the work of the professionals. For instance, Evers et al. (2002:229) called the Second Phase a

"fundamental and basic change, a transformation of culture". Furthermore, the new work disability decree was clearly perceived as important by the professionals given the fact that about 240 physicians urged a strike against this new policy, and some simply decided to quit their job (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005).

In order to ensure valid insights, we have triangulated our data (Yin, 2003:98). Firstly, we conducted extensive document analysis, as shown in Table 4.3. Secondly, semi-structured interviews with individual insurance physicians and teachers were held: seven with insurance physicians and five with individual teachers. These interviews were recorded and, following Mergenthaler and Stinson's guidelines for transcribing (1992:129-130, cited in McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003), subsequently transcribed. Thirdly, we held large group discussions with a total of 35 professionals (two with insurance physicians (ten per group) and one with teachers (fifteen teachers)). Fourthly, we checked the validity of our reconstruction by discussing the results with members of the executive boards of the main professional associations - two for the physicians and two for the teachers.

Table 4.3 Documents reviewed in comparative case study of physicians and teachers

Type of document	Insurance physicians	Secondary school teachers
Empirical academic books and articles	Berendsen (2007) Deursen, Van der Burg & Veldhuis (2007) Hartman & Boerdam (2004) Van der Burg & Deursen (2008) Van der Hart & Moekoet (2003)	Hemmer (2007) Kips (2003) Prick (2006) Van der Werf (2005) Van Veen (2003)
Newspaper articles	NRC (2003) Kammer (2005) Kammer and Jorritsma (2005) Volkskrant (2005)	NRC (2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2007d) Tromp (2003) Volkskrant (2006) Wolzak (1999)
Professional reports, magazines, websites, and broadcasts	Hagoort (2004a; 2004b) Kennedy (2005) Komduur & Egas (2006) Kuik (2007) LVA (2006) De Boer & Steenbeek (NVVG) (2005) Senger (2006) UWV (2003; 2005) WAOCafé (2005a; 2005b; 2005c; 2006b; 2006a) Zembla (2007)	Kerkhoff-Meeuwis & Vree (1998) Nierop (2004) Traas (2005) Verbrugge & Verbrugge-Breeuwsma (2006)
Official policy documents	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (2004) Staatsblad (2004)	Advisory Body on Second Phase (2005) Commission Education Reforms (2008b) Commission Education Reforms: Interviews (2008a) Kirschner & Prins (2008) Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2007)

4.3.2 Background to the policies

Work disability decree

In 2004, the Dutch government drafted new, stricter, rules regarding welfare benefits for citizens with work disabilities. The so-called adjusted assessment decree (ASB), implemented in October 2004, changed the insurance conditions for people already receiving work disability benefits. One of its aims was a substantial reduction in costs (2005). The ASB is implemented through programs run by the Dutch Institute for Employees' Insurance (UWV), a semi-autonomous agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Within

the UWV, insurance physicians are involved in implementing the ASB. They "provide social-medical evaluations with respect to the legislation concerning sick leave and employee disability" (Berendsen, 2007:225).

Second Phase

In 1998, the Second Phase was implemented in the upper levels of the Dutch secondary school system. The Second Phase consisted of three elements (Van Veen, 2003:87):

1. The implementation of a 'constructivist' view on teaching and learning, called the Study House
2. The use of student study profiles, alongside new subjects
3. Greater autonomy for schools

The first element needs explanation as it amounted to a totally different view of the educational process. Most teachers had undergone 'behavioristic' training, which emphasizes the process of knowledge transmission and the expert role of the teacher. In contrast, the 'constructivist' view concentrates on the process of learning and the role of the student. Learning is assumed an active process of construction, and knowledge is the accumulation of information, as opposed to passive assimilation. The practical implications include fewer 'traditional classes' in which one teacher explains material to thirty students at once. Instead, the students have to learn the material more independently and in small groups, with the teacher acting as a facilitator of this process. In the following sections, we will discuss which factors influenced the policy alienation experienced by these two professional groups.

4.3.3 Policy powerlessness

Powerlessness refers to the influence (or rather lack of) that public professionals have in shaping the policy program at various policy levels. Have insurance physicians and teachers experienced powerlessness and, if so, which factors influenced this?

Influence at the strategic level

With respect to powerlessness at the strategic level, we found hardly any evidence that the insurance physicians were able to influence the shaping of the policy. To do so, it would have been necessary to mobilize their professional associations and, although they tried, this did not happen (UWV, 2005:4). The main professional associations for the physicians, the NVVG and the UWVA, did not become involved in the political debate concerning the drafting of the new

rules. As a result, many physicians became frustrated with the lack of influence of their professional associations in shaping the ASB, and this contributed to feelings of powerlessness.

The strategic powerlessness of teachers also seems to have been high during the discussion about the Second Phase. Teachers felt that the implementation was done in a top-down way, without consulting them (NRC, 2007a; Prick, 2006). The feelings as expressed by the interviewed teachers supported this. One stated that: "What irritated me enormously was that the Second Phase was presented like: Guys, this is it, this in an important improvement for education. In my view, the knowledge and experience of teachers were not taken into account." In general, if teachers want to influence the shaping of a policy, they have to do so through their associations and labor unions. However, the professional teacher associations are often based on a subject (such as history or mathematics) and in this instance they did not have a lot of influence, largely due to a lack of collaboration (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b:61, 69, 106). The labor unions representing the teachers also did not have much influence over the shaping of the Second Phase (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008a:52). This lack of influence by both the professional associations and labor unions gave the teachers a sense of strategic powerlessness. This problem was acknowledged by a board member of one of the main professional associations. He stated that it was indeed true that the professional associations are increasingly unable to influence the political debate, to an extent because of the diminishing number of members. Further, aspects peculiar to this case also decreased the power of teachers to influence the policy. Here, one can include the development of a steering committee, headed by the Secretary of State, with no members from the professional associations, and the continuous stressing of the 'political primacy' by the Minister of Education.

Influence at the tactical level

Tactical powerlessness refers to the perceived influence of professionals on decisions concerning the way a policy is implemented within their organization.

For the physicians, the reorganization that created the UWV was a factor that negatively affected their position as professionals since they could no longer effectively influence decisions concerning the way policy was implemented. The UWV was established in 2002, through a merger of six organizations that implemented a range of social security programs, in order to create a 'lean' and more integrated organization. In this merger, we can clearly recognize elements of NPM as the relationship between the newly formed UWV and the Ministry was based on a contractual form of governance in which

results and costs play an important role. This results orientation is a concretization of the third NPM component - emphasis on output controls. Further, the focus on cost reduction, through downsizing, resembles the seventh component – stressing greater discipline in resource use.

Following this reorganization, professionals within the UWV are in a weak position since the organization has become increasingly hierarchical. An interviewed physician stated:

> *"We could not influence the policy very much. That is clear. The UWV is a top-down administrative organization focused on administrative processes. The professionals re-examining the clients are not the priority of the UWV. We were not consulted about the implementation conditions regarding the ASB."*

It seems that the degree of hierarchy within the organization was also a relevant factor for the teachers. However, whereas physicians felt they operated in a very hierarchical organization, many teachers experienced a more egalitarian structure within their organization. As one teacher put it: "I believe that the position of the teacher is very strong [in our school]. If you are a school manager you know that it will not work if you coerce teachers to do something they do not believe in." Consequently, in many schools, teachers were in a strong position to influence the way the Second Phase was concretized in their schools. As such, many perceived themselves to have influenced the way the Second Phase (in particular, the Study House) was enacted in their schools (Kips, 2003:48). Kips found, based on a survey of 142 teachers, that 45% agreed with the statement "I have enough opportunities to influence the way the Study House was implemented in my school", against 28% who disagreed (rest neutral).

However, in some schools, managers were the dominant party in implementing the Second Phase. Prick (2006:19) states that, in these schools, "school management dictates how the Study House has to be modeled", and that this resulted in a higher degree of tactical powerlessness experienced by teachers. This dominance of management over professionals in these schools can also be seen as an illustration of the NPM characteristic that stresses 'private sector styles of management practice'; a move away from the public service ethic and professional values (Hood, 1991:5).

Influence at the operational level
At the operational level, many physicians perceived that their level of discretion, following the introduction of the ASB, had decreased: "physicians had the

feeling that they had less influence on their job performance and could use their own professional standards less" (Kammer, 2005). Conversely, a number of physicians stated that they still had considerable discretion, but that they had to provide a more thorough argument for their decisions to their superior, and that this took up more time. As one physician put it during an interview, he could still make decisions 'in all freedom'. Nevertheless, based on a survey by De Boer and Steenbeek (2005), we conclude that, in general, physicians experienced a somewhat lower level of discretion.

Two factors seem relevant for the discretion available to physicians. Firstly, the rules in the ASB – the policy content – put pressure on the professionals. The new rules were stricter and left less room for physicians to deviate from the policy program. Secondly, aspects of NPM were an influence on the discretion open to physicians. The UWV had to implement the ASB and, in a short period, more than 325,000 people had to be re-examined. To achieve this, the UWV focused primarily on the number of re-examinations completed, setting strict performance criteria and focusing on output controls. These two NPM components curtailed professional autonomy. Extensive performance management often involves strict internal instructions and managers can feel increasing pressure to produce results. These developments made it harder for physicians to use their own discretion (Berendsen, 2007; De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005).

Many of the interviewed teachers similarly stated that their discretion had decreased. The rules in the Second Phase – the policy content – were also influential here. According to many teachers, the new rules substantially reduced their discretion. Kips (2003:54) notes that 75% of the teachers affected by the Second Phase agreed with the statement: "With the introduction of the Second Phase, it became more difficult to deviate from the official program." This was to an extent due to the intensive controlling mechanisms imposed by the national schools inspectorate, which stressed accountability and results, in line with NPM-doctrines. A second factor was the way management introduced the Study House concept into schools. The idea of the Study House was that students would be able to learn more independently. For students to be able to do this, management coerced teachers into constructing a schedule covering the course material before the start of the school year. Subsequently, the teachers were somewhat bound by this schedule, making it more difficult to exercise later discretion.

When we compare the two cases, it seems that the discretion of the teachers declined somewhat more than that of the physicians. The physicians' discretion in their *core task* – providing social-medical evaluations – did not

change substantially (Bannink et al., 2006). As one interviewed physician stated:

> *"We could not influence the organizational implementation of the ASB very much [high tactical powerlessness]. The UWV had made clear arrangements with the politicians. What we could state was that we needed our professional discretion in the execution of the ASB. We found a clear compromise on this issue."*

For the teachers, their discretion over their work content did change significantly. This was partly due to the contents of the policy. It was also related to the fact that the *professional status* of teachers is much weaker than that of physicians. An indication that this is recognized is that professional associations of teachers are now trying to address this issue by developing a 'professional statute' in which one of the central concepts is professional autonomy. When discussing this subject with a board member of a teachers association, he stated "that's why we are developing a professional statute, we would like to reach a situation where teachers can clearly state: I am the expert".

4.3.4 Policy meaninglessness

Here, meaninglessness is seen in terms of the professionals' perceptions regarding the policy's contribution to a larger purpose. This can be on the societal and/or the client level.

Meaninglessness at the societal level
Do physicians see the policy goals of the ASB as meaningless? In the ASB, the official goal is to increase the participation in work of people suffering from disabilities by looking at a person's potential rather than at their limitations (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2005). Two arguments stressed in justifying this are, firstly, that it is nearly always healthier for people with physical or psychological problems to be active and, secondly, that Dutch social security has become too expensive.

In the eyes of many, the economic goal of the ASB seems to be the more important one. As a physician put it: "I see it more as a cost-saving policy than as a method to get people in work" (WAOcafé, 2006a). This suggests that, in the implementation of the ASB, NPM-based considerations (cost reductions and efficiency gains) dominate in the trading off of values, leading to a shift in value orientation. This was not welcomed by most physicians, increasing their sense of societal meaninglessness (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; WAOcafé, 2006a).

A second factor contributing to societal meaninglessness, as witnessed by our respondents, was the number of policy changes regarding work disability. Between 2002 and 2006, major policy changes included the 'Gatekeeper Improvement Act', the ASB, and a new law on work and income. Such a situation contributed to feelings of societal meaninglessness for some physicians. The following comment from an interviewed physician illustrates this:

> *"Lately there have been so many changes: first the adjustments to the ASB, now the law regarding work and income. It happens all the time. I do not feel connected with politicians. Often they propose things which are not well thought out, but which have to be implemented right away."*

Finally, we should note that there was one aspect of the ASB which many physicians did agree with, that almost everyone receiving a work disability benefit had to be re-examined. Many claimants who were re-examined had not been examined for years, and so it became possible to assess changes in their condition, as well as remedy any previous errors in judgment. Almost all our respondents welcomed this explicitly.

Unlike the physicians, many teachers did not experience a high societal meaninglessness. The official objectives of the Second Phase are (a) to increase the quality of education in secondary schools and (b) to improve the connection with higher education (Advisory Body on Second Phase, 2005:12). Naturally, almost all teachers saw these as laudable goals. Kips (2003:49) stated that only 10% disagreed with the goals of the policy. One teacher expressed his agreement as follows: "The goal of the Second Phase as it was once formulated, to improve the connection with higher education, is excellent" (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008a:632). On the other hand, NPM-based considerations were also present here according to some teachers. A number of them believed that efficiency was a hidden goal. As one interviewed teacher stated: "I think that one important goal, which was not made very explicit, was that the Second Phase was a cheaper method. It is almost inevitable: fewer teachers would be needed as students had to work more independently."

As already seen, another factor that influences societal meaninglessness is the number of policy changes. For the teachers, as with the physicians above, this factor positively contributed to societal meaninglessness (NRC, 2007a; Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b:648; Prick, 2006),

although the interviewed teachers experienced this factor less prominently than the interviewed physicians.

Meaninglessness at the client level

The physicians experienced significant differences in the level of client meaninglessness. Of the 230,000 clients re-assessed, 90,000 saw their benefits stopped or reduced. One and a half years after re-examination, 52% of those deemed able to work had not found a job (Van der Burg & Deursen, 2008:80). A number of physicians identified strongly with this unfortunate group. They felt that they had not helped them, thus experiencing a high degree of client meaninglessness (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; LVA, 2006). As one commented (cited in Kammer & Jorritsma, 2005): "I cannot put my signature to a medical evaluation which inevitably results in cutting state assistance for the person […] someone who has been unemployed for ten years, and is searching for a job again, that is impossible".

However, not all shared this view. Several respondents stressed that, especially for younger claimants, it could be beneficial to decrease work-disability benefits. In their view, being labeled as work-disabled for a very long time was detrimental to a person's health. In this way, they identified more with the policy program and less with the immediate wishes and concerns of their clients.

Considering this, we can see that the *professional orientation* of the physicians influenced their experienced meaninglessness. Some of the interviewed physicians differentiated between so-called 'hard' and 'soft' physicians. Hard physicians believe that lowering a benefit can induce people to search for a job and, when they ultimately find one, this is beneficial for them. However, softer physicians do not believe that reducing a benefit will result in a client becoming more active. For them, it is ultimately harmful for their clients if their benefits, and hence income, are reduced. From this standpoint, professional orientation influences the experienced meaningfulness of the ASB policy.

The professional orientation of the teachers also seemed to influence their experienced client meaninglessness. Van Veen (2003:103) distinguishes between two types of teachers. On the one hand you have teachers who are 'student-oriented' and consider personal and moral development to be among the goals of education. On the other hand, there are 'content-oriented' teachers, who consider qualifications to be the overriding goal of education. Looking at the two types of teachers, the constructivist orientation of the Second Phase fits better with the student-oriented teachers. As a result, they experience the Second Phase as more meaningful for their students as it resulted in students

having to work more independently (Kips, 2003:50-51; Van Veen, 2003:127). In many schools, management framed this as a reduction in the number of hours that teachers had to teach each class, which can be viewed as a performance increase. Many content-oriented teachers experienced this situation as detrimental for the students (Kips, 2003:54; Nierop, 2004:24; Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b:139). An interviewed, content-oriented, teacher stated:

> *"I had the idea that, as I had so many classes with fewer hours per class, it became too much for me. Those students which are not very able and also not prepared to work hard, I think they were really the victims of it all."*

More student-centered teachers, however, felt that their implementation of the Second Phase was very meaningful (Van Veen, 2003:60). As one put it:

> *"Because of the Second Phase, I feel that I am better able to help the students. Before, it was only old-fashioned teaching. As such, you did not have that many opportunities to really help them. In this way, I think it is better now."*

4.3.5 Summarizing the empirical analyses

Our goal for the empirical research phase was to determine which factors influence the policy alienation experienced by insurance physicians and teachers. Our comparative case study provided us with a number of factors, and these are summarized in Figure 4.2.
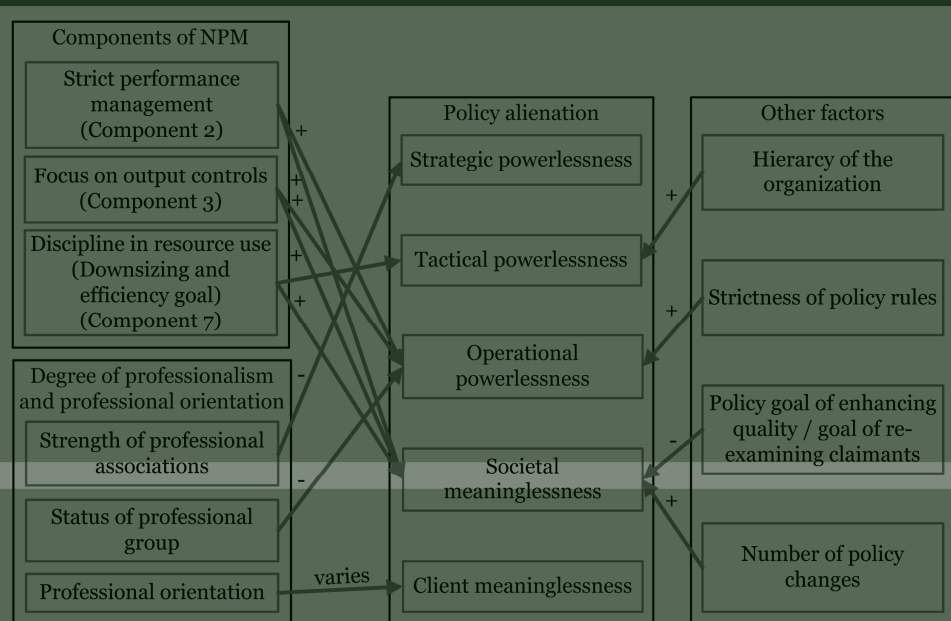
Figure 4.2 Key factors influencing the degree of policy alienation felt by teachers and physicians

We observed that numerous factors influenced the degree of policy alienation felt, and we clustered these variables into three categories: (1) New Public Management, (2) degree of professionalism and professional orientation and (3) other factors.

The degree of strategic powerlessness experienced was mainly determined by the strength of the professional associations. In both cases, the professional associations were not sufficiently strong to substantially influence the political debate. This led to a strong feeling of strategic powerlessness for both the insurance physicians and the teachers. Further, for the physicians, as a result of the constant downsizing, a focus on output controls, and the hierarchical nature of the UWV, they did not experience sufficient influence on the tactical level. Teachers, in contrast, experienced a more egalitarian structure, thereby experiencing significantly less tactical powerlessness, although this was not always the case. Operational powerlessness, linked to the discretion open to professionals, seemed to be influenced by a number of factors. For the physicians, we first saw that two components of New Public Management influenced their perceived discretion: strict performance measurement and a focus on output controls. However, their high status as physicians enabled them to still experience some discretion in their core task: providing social-medical evaluations. The discretion open to the teachers was, however, reduced somewhat more as (a) the strictness of the policy rules substantially reduced their discretion and (b) their professional status was not

sufficiently legitimized for them to be able to counter the attack on their discretion.

With respect to societal meaninglessness, we see that the NPM goal of cost reduction in the ASB led to a shift in value orientation, and one which was not welcomed by many physicians. The goal of re-assessing all those claiming the benefit seemed to be more appreciated. For the teachers, the Second Phase goal of enhancing educational quality was clearly appreciated by the teachers and, as a result, they experienced low societal meaninglessness. However, also here, some teachers noted that one goal was efficiency. Further, for both groups, it seems that the large number of policy changes increased the sense of societal meaninglessness somewhat. Looking at client meaninglessness, we see that the strength of this sub-dimension is particularly dependent on the professional orientation of the implementer. For instance, those teachers who were more student-oriented experienced less client meaninglessness in the case studied.

4.4   Discussion and conclusions

In contemporary public management literature, there is an intense ongoing debate concerning professionals in service delivery (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Emery & Giauque, 2003; Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Freidson, 2001; Hebson et al., 2003; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996). As part of the fashion for neoliberal doctrines, policies have been introduced in recent decades which focus on economic values that can run against the values held by the professionals who implement the policies. In this article, using a policy alienation framework, we have examined the pressures professionals face when implementing public policies. Based on the theoretical framework and the empirical results, a number of conclusions can be drawn that contribute to the debate on public professionals in service delivery.

Firstly, we see that New Public Management is indeed a significant factor in shaping the experiences of professionals who have to implement public policies (see also Emery & Giauque, 2003). However, there were also a number of factors affecting these experiences that were not related to NPM. Clearly, NPM was not the only factor that put pressure on professionals, a finding which contrasts with the views of some authors (for example J. Peters & Pouw, 2005). Our analysis shows that other forces are also at play, necessitating a broader view when examining pressured professionals. Policy implementation is embedded in national (for instance the strength of professional groups), organizational (such as the degree of hierarchy), and policy contexts (for instance the number of policy changes). This contextualized view on policies runs parallel to some of the findings of Ozga and Jones (2006) who discuss

knowledge transfer in Scotland as a policy which is both 'travelling' (shaped by globalizing trends) and 'embedded' (mediated by local contextual factors).

Looking especially at the degree of professionalism (an important factor rarely considered in the literature on policy implementation), we note that a first indicator of its likely influence is the strength of the professional associations. Professional associations can serve as advocates for their profession (see also Greenwood et al., 2002). In so doing, the strength of the professional associations will be influential in explaining the degree of pressure experienced by public professionals.

Further, the status of the professional group is important in explaining the pressures facing professionals. The physicians proved more capable than the teachers of maintaining discretion in their core task, and their professional status proved an important factor in this. Professionals with a relatively low status (such as teachers) seem to have greater difficulty in retaining discretion, and this leads to experiencing increased pressures. This is maybe also why 'semi-professionals', such as teachers, nurses, labor experts, and homecare workers, are experiencing increasing pressures: their professional status is insufficient to guard them against demands imposed by new policies (see also Hayes, 2001).

We also note that the professional orientation of the individual implementers strongly influences the pressures they experience. Not all professionals experience a policy in the same way. Here, the extent of the 'professional orientation - policy fit' seems to influence the pressures experienced by individual professionals in a similar way to the better known person-organization fit (Kristof, 1996). This could influence the success of a policy's implementation (Van Veen, 2003:191). We suggest that this professional-policy fit could be a fruitful concept that could provide a structure for new research on professionals and policies.

This article also provides insights for practitioners. For instance, we have shown that policies with quality-enhancing goals are more readily accepted than policies with efficiency goals. Also, policymakers could choose to involve professional associations more intensively, or to loosen the rules in order to leave professionals some discretion in applying the rules on a case-by-case basis. Further, we found that introducing numerous policy changes increases the sense of societal meaninglessness, as professionals feel overwhelmed by the changes. This finding corresponds with findings in the business administration literature on 'change fatigue' (Judson, 1991). More in general, policymakers and managers can use aspects of the article (especially Figure 4.2) in considering which opportunities are available to increase the commitment (or lower the

alienation) of public professionals implementing policies, so as to increase policy effectiveness.

We end this article by suggesting a number of directions for further research. First, the effects of policy alienation could be explored. For instance, does high policy alienation result in professionals becoming dissatisfied with their work or cynical concerning the new policies they have to implement? Second, the factors that determine policy alienation in different countries could be studied. It is not unreasonable to expect different relationships to exist in different countries, as there may be different ways of treating and perceiving professionals. Third, using an extended theoretical framework, the factors, the degree of policy alienation, and the effects could be studied more systematically, and in a quantifiable way, to explore the relative strengths of the various relationships. This could help policymakers design appropriate interventions to reduce the degree of policy alienation and so improve the policy implementation process.

5

DEVELOPING A MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT OF POLICY ALIENATION

Abstract

Currently, there is an intense debate on the pressures facing public professionals during policy implementation. Frequently professionals have difficulty identifying with new policies, resulting in among else diminished policy performance. We examine this problem using the concept of 'policy alienation', for which we have developed and tested a scale for its measurement. Policy alienation is conceptually associated with five sub-dimensions: strategic powerlessness, tactical powerlessness, operational powerlessness, societal meaninglessness and client meaninglessness. Likert-type items have been developed for these sub-dimensions which together create a policy alienation scale. The initial scale was reviewed by interviewing 21 experts. These items were then administered in a survey of 478 Dutch healthcare professionals implementing a new financial policy: Diagnosis Related Groups (DRG, or DBC). The resulting 23-item policy alienation measurement instrument demonstrated good psychometric qualities. A reliable and valid policy alienation scale can ultimately help in understanding and enhancing policy performance.

5.1 Introduction

In January 2008, the Dutch government introduced Diagnoses Related Groups in mental healthcare. This was part of a process to convert the Dutch healthcare system into one based on a regulated market. The system of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs, in Dutch Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, or DBC's) was developed as a means of determining the level of financial exchange for mental healthcare provision. The DRG-policy differs significantly from the former method, in which each medical action resulted in a financial claim. This meant that, the more sessions that a professional caregiver (a psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist) had with a patient, the more recompense that could be claimed. This former system was considered by some to be inefficient (Kimberly et al., 2009). The DRG-policy changed the situation by stipulating a *standard* rate for each disorder, such as a mild depression. This was a major change, which was not welcomed by many professional caregivers. In one large-scale survey, about 90 per cent of these professionals wanted this policy to be abandoned and some openly demonstrated against it (Palm et al., 2008). The following two quotations from healthcare professionals are illustrative (drawn from open answers of a survey described in this study):

> *"Within the new healthcare system economic values are leading. Too little attention is being paid to the content: professionals helping patients. The result is that professionals become more aware of the costs and revenues of their behavior. This comes at the expense of acting according to professional standards."*

> *"We experience the DRG-policy as a disaster. I concentrate as much as possible on treating my own patients, in order to derive some satisfaction from my work."*

This example is not unique: public professionals often appear to have difficulties identifying with the policy they have to implement, which nowadays often focus on efficiency and financial transparency. This can be seen as an outcome of the influence of New Public Management (NPM) (Freidson, 2001; Jos & Tompkins, 2009; Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012). These economic values may take precedence over more traditional professionals values, such as providing the best care possible, solidarity and professional autonomy. These issues fit within a wider trend of a debate concerning the pressures public professionals

such as teachers, social workers and physicians face when they are involved in service delivery processes (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Thomas & Davies, 2005).

In this article, we quantitatively analyze, in terms of 'policy alienation', these identification problems that professionals face with new policies. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients (Tummers et al., 2009). The purpose of this article is to present a reliable and valid policy alienation scale. Earlier studies have used qualitative case studies to explore the policy alienation concept (Tummers et al., 2009; Tummers, Steijn, & Bekkers, forthcoming 2012). We take the next step by developing a reliable and valid quantitative scale for assessing policy alienation.

What is the added value of having such a scale? Firstly, there is an increasing need to quantify the experiences of public professionals with policies with NPM-characteristics. To date, most studies on NPM and professionals have had a rather qualitative nature (examples are Ackroyd et al., 2007; Thomas & Davies, 2005). The strength of this qualitative research is that it captures the plethora of reasons for increasingly problematic public | professional employment such as the quality of line management. Quantitative research can help in theory testing and statistical generalization, which can provide new insights to the debate concerning the experiences of NPM at the 'street-level', where policies are implemented.

The second contribution of a policy alienation scale is focused on theory development. Indeed, although prominent scholars have emphasized the crucial role of committed implementers (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009), few have developed and tested a framework for analyzing this topic. Policy alienation is embedded in the alienation tradition, which has a long history in the sociology of work and organization. In addition, insights drawn from the policy implementation literature are used. As such, we explicitly opt for an interdisciplinary approach in developing a coherent framework for analysing the identification problems of public professionals implementing policies, something which can be highly beneficial for the advancement of theory in policy implementation (O'Toole, 2000). Here, we also identify with Pandey and Scott (2002) who note that sound measurement, through the careful development of concepts and measurement scales, can be highly beneficial for public management practice.

In the next section, we will examine the policy alienation framework and its background. We will then describe the method (Section 3) and outline our results (Section 4 and 5) as they relate to the goal of developing a policy alienation scale. This includes the generation of an item pool which was refined

through 21 interviews, resulting in a scale which was then tested in a survey of 478 public professionals. We conclude by discussing the contribution a policy alienation scale can make to the public administration discipline, for both researchers as well as practitioners.

5.2   The policy alienation framework

5.2.1   Background to policy alienation

The intellectual roots of alienation as a concept can be found in the work of Karl Marx (1961 [1844]), who was inspired by among else Hegel. Marx argued that many workers suffer from objective alienation, as they did not own the resulting product of their labor, or the means of production. Marx argued that this objective alienation from their work resulted in a subjective reality as the workers felt alienated from their consciousness ('their species being'), or, in else, from themselves. Most contemporary scholars have examined this subjective notion of alienation more closely (Kanungo, 1982:61-62).

Scholars have used the (subjective) alienation term in various analyses and this has given rise to a number of meanings being attributed to the term (Kanungo, 1982:24). Seeman (1959) differentiates among various meanings using a number of dimensions of alienation. Blauner (1964), provides operational measures for three work alienation dimensions as classified by Seeman: powerlessness, meaninglessness and social isolation.

The concept of work alienation is also recognized in the public administration literature. For instance, Pandey and Kingsley (2000) have shown that work alienation is a strong predictor of the extent to which public employees experience 'red tape'. Further, in his renowned work 'Street-level bureaucracy', Michael Lipsky argues that street-level work is by definition alienating work (1980:75). He stressed classic features of work alienation such as being unable to control the pace of work (a form of powerlessness) and working only on segments of the product (potentially resulting in meaninglessness).

Researchers examining work alienation tend to look at what can be called 'local alienation' (Kalekin-Fishman, 2000): phenomena focused on one aspect, such as work or a policy. At the same time, there are also more traditional debates about the philosophical underpinnings of alienation (Geyer, 1996). Given the abundance and diversity of literature on the subject, the alienation concept continues to be viewed as a useful concept in researching a range of phenomena.

5.2.2 Defining policy alienation

Tummers, Bekkers & Steijn (2009) were the first to conceptualise policy alienation. In this article, we develop operational measures for this policy alienation concept. Policy alienation fits within the 'local' alienation category (Kalekin-Fishman, 2000), as it focuses on one aspect, that is, a particular policy. Moreover, it is subjective in that it looks at the experiences of public professionals with policy. As such, it is similar to the majority of work alienation research which also focuses on alienation as perceived by the worker (Kanungo, 1982).

How can the concept of alienation be linked to the world of policy implementation? Public policies are seen as referring to the binding allocation of values, for society as a whole, in a situation of structural scarcity due, for example, to a lack of financial or natural resources (Easton, 1965). As a result, trade-offs become unavoidable between these values, for example between efficiency and equity (Stone, 2003). Frontline public employees implementing public policies are sometimes able to make their own judgements on the appropriate trade-off when applying a policy to an individual case, such as when a police officer decides whether to impose an on-the-spot fine (Lipsky, 1980). When professional case workers have to implement a policy, many such trade-offs will occur. These public professionals, as members of professional communities or associations, also have to deal with professional norms and standards. Here, we will focus on the alienation that public professionals experience in implementing policy in such a situation. They might, for instance, feel alienated from a policy if they cannot see how it is beneficial for their clients. More specific, we distinguish between two dimensions of policy alienation: policy powerlessness and policy meaninglessness.

5.2.3 Policy powerlessness

Seeman (1959:784) defines powerlessness as "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks". In the realm of policy formulation and implementation, powerlessness relates to the degree of influence public professionals have over shaping a policy program. This influence may be exercised on strategic, tactical or operational levels.

Strategic powerlessness refers to the perceived influence of professionals on decisions concerning the content of a policy, as is captured in rules and regulations. This form of powerlessness can occur, for example, when a new policy is drafted without the help of the professionals, by for example not consulting their professionals associations or labor unions. A good example is the policy called 'The Second Phase', which was implemented in Dutch

secondary schools. Labor unions and professional teacher associations had little influence over the drafting of the policy (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b). This lack of influence increased the strategic powerlessness felt by many teachers. As one teacher noted (cited in Tummers, Bekkers, & Steijn, forthcoming 2012): "What irritated me enormously was that the Second Phase was presented like: Guys, this is it, this in an important improvement for education. In my view, the knowledge and experience of teachers were not taken into account".

Tactical powerlessness refers to professionals' perceived influence (or rather lack thereof) over decisions concerning the way a policy is executed within their own organization. Professionals can feel involved, for example, if they take part in working groups or meetings on the execution of the policy program. As such, participation during organizational implementation can help to decrease tactical powerlessness (Judson, 1991). Conversely, management may choose not to involve professionals. The more that professionals feel they have some influence over decisions concerning the way a policy is executed in their organization, the less they experience tactical powerlessness.

Operational powerlessness relates to the influence of professionals during actual policy implementation. As such, while the tactical level looks at the influence of the professional on the way the organization executes the policy, operational powerlessness examines the influence professionals perceive themselves to have while actually implementing the policy. For instance, do they have to adhere to rigid procedures while implementing the policy? In the public administration literature, this is described in terms of a civil servant's discretion (Lipsky, 1980). Operational powerlessness may be particularly pronounced in professionals whose expectations of discretion and autonomy contradict notions of bureaucratic control (Freidson, 2001). The greater the perceived discretion when public professionals implement a policy, the lower their feelings of operational powerlessness.

5.2.4 Policy meaninglessness

The second dimension of policy alienation is meaninglessness. In general, Seeman (1959:786) notes that meaninglessness refers to the individual's sense of understanding of the events (here, the policy) in which he or she is engaged. Similarly, Sarros et al. (2002:304) define meaninglessness as "the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contribution to a larger purpose". In the sphere of policy implementation, one can distinguish two types of policy meaninglessness.

First, on a societal level, meaninglessness can refer to the perception of professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals.

For example, a professional may perceive that a policy program is not actually providing desirable public services, such as security. When this is the case, a professional may experience high societal meaninglessness. The concept of societal meaninglessness is particularly relevant for public professionals implementing policies. These professionals often blame politicians for 'initiative overload' and for a lack of resources to effect change (Turnbull, 2002:369). They often feel unable to provide the desirable public goods or services. Against this background, it is not surprising that public professionals are often mistrustful of new policies and experience high societal meaninglessness.

Second, on the client level, meaningless reflects the perceptions of the value added for their own clients by professionals implementing a policy. Thus, whereas societal meaninglessness looks at the perceived added value of the policy to socially relevant goals, client meaninglessness examines the perceived added value for the individual 'clients' of the professional when implementing the policy. If professionals do perceive that they are really helping their own clients when implementing a policy, they will probably experience a low level of client meaninglessness. The client meaninglessness dimension is closely related to the 'social work narrative' as this is experienced by frontline workers, such as implementing public professionals, who focus on helping clients achieve long-term success (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003). Public professionals want to make a difference to their clients' lives when implementing a policy.

5.2.5 Policy alienation framework

Having described the background to, and the dimensions of, policy alienation, we can move on to develop a policy alienation framework that includes definitions of the sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions will act as guides in scale development and thus need to be appropriately defined. The policy alienation framework is shown Figure 5.1.

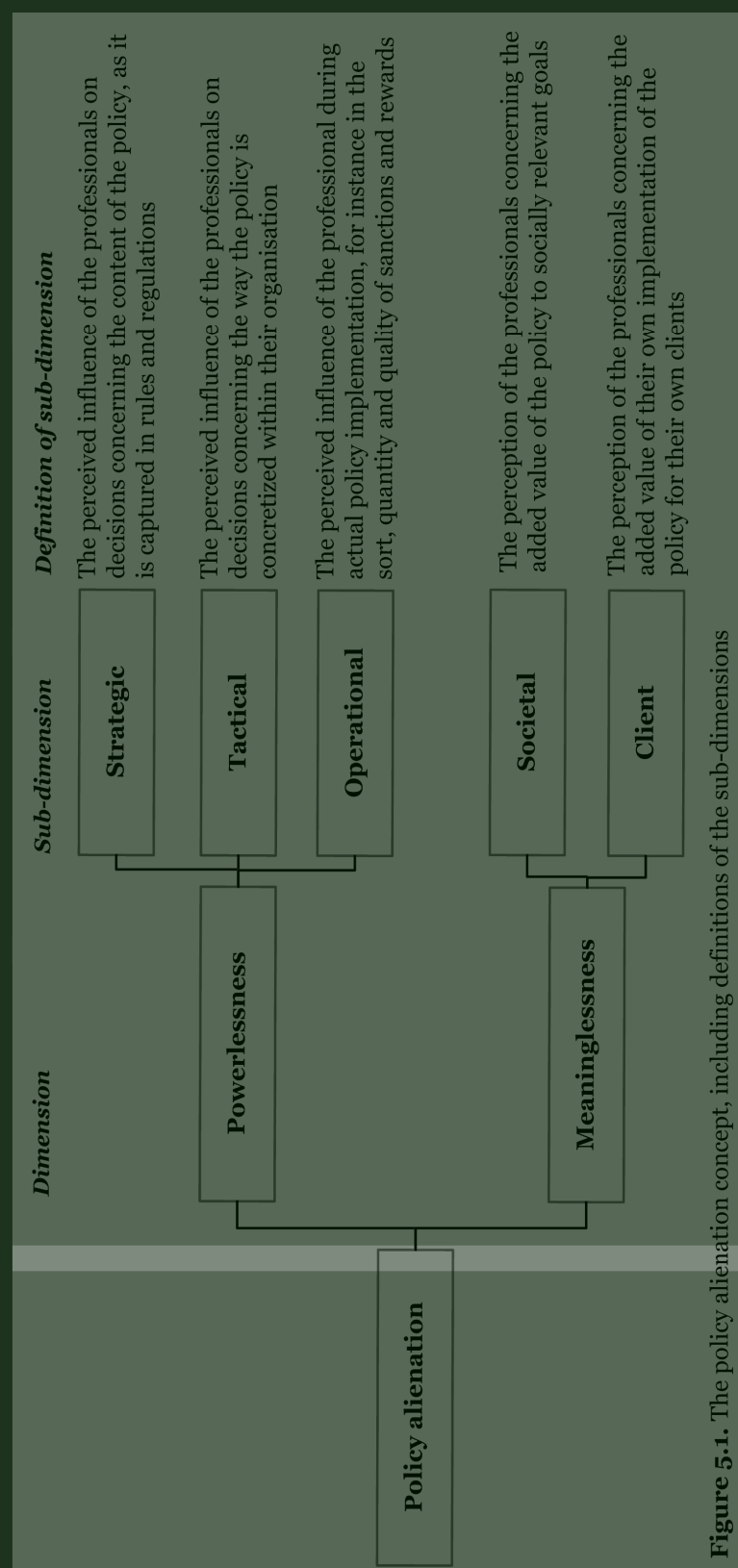| Dimension	Sub-dimension	Definition of sub-dimension
	Strategic	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as it is captured in rules and regulations
Powerlessness	**Tactical**	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the way the policy is concretized within their organisation
	Operational	The perceived influence of the professional during actual policy implementation, for instance in the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards
	Societal	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals
Meaninglessness	**Client**	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of their own implementation of the policy for their own clients

Policy alienation

Figure 5.1. The policy alienation concept, including definitions of the sub-dimensions

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Using the DRG-policy for scale development purposes

We can now start to develop a scale to measure policy alienation. Our study, used for scale development, involves mental healthcare professionals implementing the DRG-policy (part of the Law Health Market Organization), as discussed in the introduction. The Law Health Market Organization and the DRG-policy can be seen as the introduction of regulated competition in Dutch healthcare, in line with NPM trends, and more specifically as a shift towards greater competition and efficient resource use (Hood, 1991).

We used this DRG-policy for three reasons. Firstly, public professionals – here psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists – are tasked with implementing this policy, and this is necessary as the concept is designed to add to the debate on public professionals in service delivery. Secondly, the DRG-policy has a strong focus on economic goals, such as efficiency and transparency, and it is policies which pursue these types of goals that professionals seem to have problems with. Thirdly, moves towards similar payment systems in healthcare have been observed in other countries (Kimberly et al., 2009).

5.3.2 Item generation and expert review

For each sub-dimension of policy alienation, ten items were generated in the form of five-point Likert scales. We used templates in constructing these items. Templates allow researchers to adapt items to their specific situation by replacing general phrases with more specific ones: ones that fit the context of their research. For example, instead of using the terms 'the policy' and 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items to suit the specific situation, here replacing them with 'the DRG-policy' and 'mental healthcare professionals'. This approach has been found to increase reliability and content validity (DeVellis, 2003). As an example, one of the template items for tactical powerlessness was:

> *"In my organization, professionals could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the policy."*

In our study this becomes:

> *"In my institution, mental healthcare professionals could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the DRG-policy."*

To further increase content validity, 21 experts examined the initial pool of items. These experts were selected for their various expertises (DeVellis, 2003:75). They included three scholars specialized in literature on work and policy alienation, four scholars specialized in quantitative methodology in psychology or public administration, one specialist in electronic surveys and eight public administration scholars. Further, five mental healthcare specialists were interviewed: the chairmen of the two nationwide mental healthcare associations, one scholar in healthcare management and two mental healthcare professionals.

After each interview, we would potentially add or discard items based on the expert's comments. Based on the expert interviews, we chose the six best-fitting items for each sub-dimension to construct a final pool of items. Harvey et al. (1985 in Hinkin, 1998) recommend a minimum of four items per scale for testing the homogeneity of items within a latent construct. By selecting six items, we retained the possibility of deleting items in later stages of the scale development process (DeVellis, 2003:57). We checked the validity of this pool of items by presenting it to three alienation experts, two quantitative methodologists and one specialist in mental healthcare.

The mental healthcare specialists also assessed the templates to determine appropriate terms for the DRG case study. Based on their recommendations, we used the following terms in the templates:

Table 5.1 Templates used in DRG-policy

Term in standard template	*Term used with DRG-policy*
Policy	DRG-policy or DRGs
Professionals	Mental healthcare professionals
Organization	Institution
Clients	Patients
Policy goal	Four goals were identified: Increasing... - Transparency in costs - Transparency in quality - Efficiency - Patient choice among providers

5.3.3 Sampling and response rate

The final pool of items was tested using a base sample of 1,800 mental healthcare professionals, randomly selected from the databases of two nationwide mental healthcare associations. We received returns from 478 of these professionals. This is viewed as a sufficient number for scale development

purposes given that Nunnally and Bernstein (1978) suggest that 300 responses is sufficient. We asked the non-respondents for reasons why did they did no fill out this survey. The major reason for not responding was that the professionals did not work with DRGs, as they were for example not yet implemented in their organizations. The next most frequent reasons offered for not-participating were retirement or change of occupation.

Of the respondents, 340 (71%) were women. This is consistent with national averages for mental healthcare professionals, where 69% are women (Palm et al., 2008). The mean age was 48, which is slightly older than the national average (M = 44). Given the large number of respondents and the similarity of the respondents on demographic variables and the reasons for not participating given by the non-respondents, we can be convincingly confident that our respondents were representative for the population.

5.3.4 Analysis based on principal components analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the data using a principle components approach with an oblique rotation. At this early stage in developing a policy alienation scale, exploratory factor analysis is favored over methods which test hypothesized groups, such as confirmatory factor analysis. We opted for principal component analysis as it is a proven procedure, common in the social sciences (Field, 2005:629-631). We opted for oblique rotation as this is the favoured rotation method when factors are expect to be related (Field, 2005), which we indeed expected, based on the policy alienation framework (Tummers et al., 2009).

5.4 RESULTS OF FACTOR ANALYSES

In the theoretical framework, we distinguished between two dimensions: powerlessness and meaninglessness and, as anticipated, these two dimensions emerged when analysing the data.[1] We have structured the discussion on the results according to these two policy alienation dimensions for reasons of clarity.

5.4.1 Exploratory factor analysis: powerlessness

Before conducting a factor analysis, the inter-item correlation matrix was examined. If our various items truly measure the same underlying dimension

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[1] On conducting a factor analysis including all items and looking for two factors in total, all the items written to tap powerlessness fell within one factor, and all the items for meaningless in the other. When opting to retain factors based on the obtained scree plot, the Kaiser's criterion and the theoretical meaningfulness of the factors, seven factors were retained, as described in this section: 1. strategic powerlessness, 2. tactical powerlessness, 3. operational powerlessness, 4. strategic meaningless goal transparency, 5. strategic meaningless goal efficiency, 6. strategic meaningless goal client choice, 7. client meaninglessness.

(i.e. powerlessness) we would expect them to be interrelated. On this basis, we deleted only one item which had a correlation below .4 with the other items considered and did not add theoretical value to the scale.

The initial factor solution contained four factors, with the items proposed for strategic powerlessness loading onto two distinct factors. We retained those items which best fitted our definition of strategic powerlessness, thus deleting two items. As a consequence, the final exploratory factor analysis produced a satisfactory three-factor solution, each of which could clearly be identified. These factors were retained based on the scree plot, the Kaiser's criterion and the theoretical meaningfulness of the factors (DeVellis, 2003).

Having obtained the factor structure, we then determined the Cronbach's alphas for each scale. The alphas for the strategic, tactical and operational powerlessness scales were all acceptable (.74, .86 and .82, respectively). To check for potential redundancy, we tested whether deleting items would increase scale reliability but concluded that it was not necessary to delete any items. The results of the exploratory factor analysis are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Policy powerlessness factor loadings for the final item pool items

Item	Factor (F) loadings		
	F1	F2	F3
Strategic powerlessness – eigenvalue 1.6, 10.4% variance explained			
In my opinion, mental healthcare professionals had too little power to influence the DRG-policy	.74		
We mental healthcare professionals were completely powerless during the introduction of the DRG-policy	.83		
Mental healthcare professionals could not at all influence the development of the DRG-policy at the national level (Minister and Ministry of Health, Welfare & Sport, Parliament)	.73		
Tactical powerlessness – eigenvalue 5.0, 33.6% variance explained			
In my institution, especially mental healthcare professionals could decide how the DRG-policy was being implemented (R)		.77	
In my institution mental healthcare professionals have - by means of working groups or meetings - taken part in decisions on the execution of the DRG-policy (R)		.83	
The management of my institution should have involved the mental healthcare professionals far more in the execution of the DRG-policy		.65	
Mental healthcare professionals were not listened to over the introduction of the DRG-policy in my institution		.81	
In my institution, mental healthcare professionals could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the DRG-policy (R)		.78	
I and my fellow mental healthcare professionals were completely powerless in the introduction of the DRG-policy in my institution		.65	
Operational powerlessness – eigenvalue 2.3, 15.4% variance explained			
I have freedom to decide how to use DRGs (R)			.50
While working with DRGs, I can be in keeping with the patient's needs (R)			.76
Working with DRGs feels like a harness in which I cannot easily move			.78
When I work with DRGs, I have to adhere to tight procedures			.68
While working with DRGs, I cannot sufficiently tailor to the needs of my patients			.80
While working with DRGs, I can make my own judgements (R)			.77
Note: Factor loadings <.4 are not shown. R = reverse item			

Inter-factor correlations are presented in Table 5.3. The facts that, prior to rotation, all the items loaded significantly onto the first factor and, secondly, that the factors are not independent supports the view that these are all dimensions of the same trait (i.e. powerlessness).

Table 5.3 Policy powerlessness: subscale intercorrelations (All significant at the p <.01 level)

Component	*SP*	*TP*	*OP*
Strategic powerlessness	1		
Tactical powerlessness	.29	1	
Operation powerlessness	.23	.19	1

5.4.2 Exploratory factor Analysis: meaninglessness

As with powerlessness, prior to conducting the factor analysis for policy meaninglessness, we examined the inter-item correlations. We deleted one item, concerning client meaninglessness, as its correlation with all the other items was less than .4.

The final exploratory factor analysis contained four factors. The initial factor analysis had additional factors, with a number of the items addressing societal meaninglessness loading onto different factors. Closer inspection revealed that these items lacked clarity. On deleting these items (two items for each of the four goals), the resulting final factor exploratory analysis had four factors: three addressing societal meaninglessness (transparency, efficiency and patient choice) and one client meaninglessness.

The transparency scale of societal meaninglessness requires some explanation. The items were first developed for two separate scales: transparency regarding the costs of care, and transparency regarding the quality of care. The exploratory factor analysis led to them becoming merged into one dimension transparency. Further, we see in Table 5.4 that three items had factor scores for both the transparency and the efficiency goals. This is related to the fact that these items concern the *transparency* (and so related to the transparency goal) of *costs* (which is related to the efficiency goal). We assigned these items to the transparency factor as they are primarily concerned with transparency issues and their factor scores on the transparency factor were considerably higher.

After determining the final factors, the associated Cronbach's alphas were calculated. The alphas for the three societal meaninglessness factors were all acceptable (.91, .91 and .90). Although deleting one item from each scale would have increased the alphas, we did not do this because they were already

very acceptable. However, for client meaninglessness, we did delete one item, firstly because it was not that clearly formulated and, secondly, because deleting the item increased the Cronbach's alpha from .86 to .91.The factor structure did not change on deleting this item, and the results are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Policy meaninglessness factor loadings for the final item pool items

Item	*Factor (F) loadings*			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
Societal meaninglessness (goal transparency) – eigenvalue 1.1, 5.3% variance explained				
I think that the DRG-policy, in the long term, will lead to transparency in the costs of healthcare (R)	.56	(.40)		
I think that the DRG-policy, in the short term, will lead to transparency in the costs of healthcare (R)	.53	(.41)		
I think that the DRG-policy has already led to greater transparency in healthcare costs (R)	.49			
Overall, I think that the DRG regulation leads to more transparency in healthcare costs (R)	.51	(.47)		
I think that the DRG-policy in the long term leads to transparency in the quality of healthcare (R)	.73			
I think that the DRG-policy in the short term leads to transparency in the quality of healthcare (R)	.74			
I think that the DRG-policy has already led to greater transparency in healthcare quality (R)	.48			
Overall, I think that the DRG regulation leads to more transparency in healthcare quality (R)	.64			
Societal meaninglessness (goal efficiency) – eigenvalue 10.7, 53.6% variance explained				
I think that the DRG-policy in the long term will lead to more efficiency in mental healthcare (R)		.75		
I think that the DRG-policy in the short term will lead to more efficiency in mental healthcare (R)		.80		
In some treatments, the DRG-policy leads to more efficiency (R)		.77		
Overall, I think that the DRG regulation leads to more efficiency in mental healthcare (R)		.79		

Item	Factor (F) loadings			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
Societal meaninglessness (goal patient choice) – eigenvalue 1.3, 6.4% variance explained				
I think that the DRG-policy in the long term will lead to more options for patients in choosing between mental healthcare providers (R)	.88			
I think that the DRG-policy in the short term will lead to more options for patients in choosing between mental healthcare providers (R)	.85			
Because of the DRG-policy, patients with certain disorders have more options in choosing between mental healthcare providers (R)	.80			
Overall, I think that the DRG regulation leads to choices for patients between mental healthcare providers (R)	.76			
Client meaninglessness – eigenvalue 1.6, 8.2% variance explained				
With the DRG-policy, I can better solve the problems of my patients (R)	.92			
The DRG-policy is contributing to the welfare of my patients (R)	.92			
Because of the DRG-policy, I can help patients more efficiently than before (R)	.89			
I think that the DRG-policy is ultimately favourable for my patients (R)	.75			

The factors were correlated as expected, as shown below.

Table 5.5 Intercorrelations among the meaninglessness sub-dimensions (All significant at the p <.01 level)

Component	SZ-T	SZ-D	SZ-K	OZ
Societal meaninglessness (goal - transparency)	1			
Societal meaninglessness (goal - efficiency)	.52	1		
Societal meaninglessness (goal - patient choice)	.51	.46	1	
Client meaninglessness	.49	.45	.55	1

5.4.3 Descriptive statistics on policy alienation and its dimensions

Having identified the items which belong to each sub-dimension, we can determine the degrees of powerlessness and meaninglessness experienced and, from this, the extent of policy alienation. The results of this analysis is shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Descriptive statistics of policy alienation and its dimensions

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SE	Measurement method
Policy alienation	2.12	5	3.82	0.54	mean of 1 and 2
1.Powerlessness	2	5	3.61	0.61	mean of 1.1-1.3
1.1 Strategic powerlessness	1	5	3.75	0.82	
1.2 Tactical powerlessness	1.33	5	3.60	0.78	
1.3 Operational powerlessness	1	5	3.48	0.77	
2. Meaninglessness	2.17	5	4.05	0.66	mean of 2.1 and 2.2
2.1 Societal meaninglessness: Overall	1.67	5	3.84	0.72	mean 2.1.1- 2.1.3
2.1.1 Societal meaninglessness: Goal transparency	1.5	5	3.87	0.73	
2.1.2 Societal meaninglessness: Goal efficiency	1.5	5	3.67	0.91	
2.1.3 Societal meaninglessness: Goal patient choice	2	5	4.00	0.78	
2.2 Client meaninglessness	1.75	5	4.28	0.71	

Examining Table 5.6, we see that we decided to measure powerlessness, meaninglessness and policy alienation by weighting all the sub-dimensions equally. This makes sense since, otherwise, the weight of the sub-dimensions could be a result of the number of items or, for societal meaninglessness, the number of goals identified. Second, the Table shows that professionals differ in their score on policy alienation, which ranged from 2.12 to 5. Third, and most important, the average policy alienation score is quite high at 3.82. Other studies (Mengelberg & Velthuys, 2007; Palm et al., 2008) have similarly found that mental healthcare professionals in general have problems identifying with the DRG-policy. This consistency in findings adds weight to the validity of the policy alienation scale.

We have now constructed an initial policy alienation scale. Next, we will investigate the validity of this scale by examining its theoretical and empirical

relationships with other concepts. If the relationships between the concepts are in line with those suggested by the theory, we can be more confident that we have truly measured policy alienation: a process known as construct validity (DeVellis, 2003).

5.5   RESULTS OF CONSTRUCT VALIDITY TESTS

This section focuses on the construct validity of the policy alienation scales. We examine the relationship of policy alienation with a measure on the job level (job satisfaction) and a measure on the policy level (change willingness). Table 5.7 shows that these concepts are related to policy alienation as predicted. This is discussed below.

Table 5.7 Correlations between policy alienation, its sub-dimensions and the related concepts

Concept	Policy alienation	Powerlessness	Meaninglessness	Strat.P.	Tact.P.	Oper.P.	Soc.M.	Oper.M.
Job satisfaction	-.18**	-.17**	-.13*	n.s.	-.16**	-.19**	-.14**	n.s.
Willingness to change	-.59**	-.38**	-.60**	-.21**	-.25**	-.38**	-.59**	-.51**

Note * p < .05 ** p < .01 n.s. = non-significant

5.5.1   Policy alienation and job satisfaction

First, we examine the relationship between policy alienation and job satisfaction. Participative decision-making has been linked to higher levels of satisfaction (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005). Further, greater autonomy often leads to a higher degree of satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Several studies have shown that experiencing work meaninglessness significantly decreases satisfaction (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Based on these findings, we would expect public professionals who score highly on the policy alienation dimensions to exhibit low job satisfaction.

To test this, we used one item to measure job satisfaction: 'Overall, I am satisfied with my job'. We opted for a single item measure on the basis that Nagy (2002:85) states that measuring job satisfaction with one item "is more efficient, is more cost-effective, contains more face validity, and is better able to measure changes in job satisfaction".

Our data show that public professionals who score highly on policy alienation are indeed less satisfied with their job: policy alienation correlated negatively and significantly with job satisfaction (r = -.18, p<.01). Further, the dimensions making up policy alienation also both correlated negatively with job satisfaction (powerlessness: r = -.17, p<.01; meaninglessness: r = -.13, p<.05). The correlations are moderate, which could be expected since policy alienation is measured on the policy level whereas job satisfaction is measured on the, more general, job level (DeVellis, 2003:61).

5.5.2 Policy alienation and change willingness

Metselaar (1997:34) defines change willingness as "a positive intention towards the implementation of modifications in an organization's structure, or work and administrative processes, resulting in efforts from the organization member's side to support or enhance the change process". High change willingness is expected to be related to both low powerlessness (Piderit, 2000) and meaninglessness (Metselaar, 1997). For example, if public professionals perceive the goals of a new policy to be very meaningful (i.e. low societal meaninglessness), they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards its implementation (a high change willingness).

Change willingness was measured using a validated five-item scale which has been shown to offer good reliability (Metselaar, 1997). This scale uses templates to specify the change. Sample items used in our study are: 'I am willing to contribute to the introduction of DRGs' and 'I am willing to free up time to implement the DRG-policy'. The scale's Cronbach's alpha was .85.

As anticipated, policy alienation was negatively related to change willingness (r = -.59, p<.01). That is, public professionals experiencing high policy alienation are less willing to make efforts to support the implementation of the policy. It is interesting to note that the correlation between powerlessness and change willingness is considerably weaker than that between meaninglessness and change willingness (r = -.38, p<0.1 and r = -.60, p<0.1, respectively). One possible conclusion from this is that, for public professionals, it is more important to see the logic of a new policy – to understand the 'case for change' in change management terms – than it is to have the feeling that one is able to influence the shaping of that policy.

5.6 Conclusions and discussion

The purpose of this research was to establish a validated scale for the measurement of policy alienation. Based on a theoretical framework of policy alienation, an initial scale was developed. This scale was refined through discussions with 21 experts. The refined scale was then validated in a survey of

478 mental healthcare professionals who were involved in implementing a reimbursement policy. The results indicate that five sub-dimensions of policy alienation are valid: (1) strategic powerlessness, (2) tactical powerlessness, (3) operational powerlessness, (4) societal meaninglessness and (5) client meaninglessness. Following factor analyses, the final scale consisted of 23 items (see also Appendix 1). The construct validity of the scale was examined by looking at the relationships with job satisfaction and change willingness. The significant correlations found indicate that the scale behaves as expected. This increases our confidence policy alienation was measured with the proposed scale.

Like all studies, this study has limitations. It should be viewed as a first endeavor at developing a scale for measuring policy alienation. The scale could be improved by including additional items for strategic powerlessness and some positive items for the sub-dimensions related to meaninglessness. Once the scale has been thus improved, it could be retested in a similar large scale survey among mental healthcare professionals implementing DRGs. A confirmatory factor analysis could then be used to validate the scale structure obtained in this follow-up study. Another limitation is that the scales were only tested on one policy. Although the study's generalizability was improved by the fact that the sample included a large number of public professionals, working in different occupations, positions and places, one should be cautious in generalizing this to other public-sector policies or domains. A logical direction for further research would be to first validate the scale in a second survey on the DRG-policy, and then to test the refined policy alienation scale using a comparative approach, examining different kinds of policies in various public domains.

There are a number of potential uses for the policy alienation scale. First, it could be used to carefully examine the numerous claims made concerning professionals in the public sector. In the contemporary public management literature there is an intense debate concerning the perceived worsening state of professionals in service delivery (Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012; Thomas & Davies, 2005). Some argue that the degree of autonomy open to professionals is no longer sufficient (Van den Brink et al., 2006). Further, Emery and Giauque (2003) note that focusing only on the economic logic of an action is problematic for public professionals. A psychometrically-sound policy alienation scale could help to examine such claims critically. Do professionals really experience insufficient discretion while implementing policies? Do they really view the goals of contemporary policies, which are often predominantly economic, as meaningless? Here, the policy alienation scale could be used alongside more general, job-level concepts such as personal disposition to resist change and Public Service Motivation. This

would allow a broader view, looking at attitudes on both the policy and the job levels.

The policy alienation scale also has potential uses for public management practitioners, such as managers, policy makers, chairmen of professional associations and implementing professionals themselves. Since our policy alienation scale takes into account five sub-dimensions, a more all-encompassing view of the possible problems facing professionals when implementing new policies can be obtained. By addressing these problems highlighted using the policy alienation scale, managers, professionals and policy makers could increase policy performance. For instance, in the case studied the results highlight that professionals do not see that the policy is valuable for their own clients (client meaninglessness on average very high: 4.28 out of 5). Practitioners could study the reasons for this high score and possibly adjust the policy to increase its effectiveness for clients.

Concluding, our research shows that a policy alienation scale can be valuable for both scholars and practitioners alike. Additional research, both scholarly as well as applied, is needed to explore the concept and its associated value further.

6

THE INFLUENCE OF POLICY ALIENATION ON THE WILLINGNESS TO IMPLEMENT PUBLIC POLICIES

Abstract

Nowadays, many public policies focus on economic values, such as efficiency and client choice. Public professionals often show resistance to implementing such policies. We analyze this problem using an interdisciplinary approach. From public administration, we draw on the policy alienation concept, which consists of five dimensions: strategic powerlessness, tactical powerlessness, operational powerlessness, societal meaninglessness and client meaninglessness. These are considered as factors that influence the willingness of professionals to implement policies (change willingness – a concept drawn from the change management literature). We test this model in a survey among 478 Dutch healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. The first finding was that perceived autonomy (operational powerlessness) significantly influenced change willingness, whereas strategic and tactical powerlessness were not found to be significant. Second, both the meaninglessness dimensions proved highly significant. We conclude that clarifying the value of a policy is important in getting professionals to willingly implement a policy, whereas their participation on the strategic or tactical levels seems less of a motivational factor. These insights help in understanding why public professionals embrace or resist the implementation of particular policies.

6.1 Introduction

This article examines factors that influence the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies using a quantitative, survey-based approach. In doing this, we combine insights from public administration literature (Freidson, 2001; Lipsky, 1980; Tummers et al., 2009) and change management literature (Metselaar, 1997; Piderit, 2000).

In public administration literature, there is an intense debate concerning the pressures public professionals face in service delivery (Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012). This debate often focuses on the pressures professionals face when implementing new policies (Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001). Researchers note that many contemporary policies focus strongly on economic values, such as efficiency and client choice. This can be seen as an outcome of the influence of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood, 1991). Public professionals may have difficulty in accepting the changing trade-offs in values which become manifest when implementing such a policy program. Here, Emery and Giauque (2003:475) note that "to focus on only the economic logic of action poses problems for public agents. They have to set aside some other shared values in order to concentrate solely on 'measurement management'". These adopted output performance norms often conflict with professional standards, or with the demands of increasingly empowered clients. As a result, public professionals often seem to be unwilling to implement new policies.

Examples of this unwillingness abound (Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001). For instance, in the Netherlands, many insurance physicians encountered substantial professional and moral concerns when asked to implement a new policy focused on re-examining welfare clients (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005). Other examples from Canada show that public professionals often do not accept new policies, and sometimes therefore leave and start their own organizations (White, 1996).

Thus, in the public administration literature, there are indications of professionals being unwilling to implement new policies. Change management literature has a long history of examining – both qualitatively and quantitatively - the willingness of employees to accept or reject changes. The support for organizational change on the part of employees is generally viewed as critical for the success of planned changes. As such, much attention is focused on better understanding the ways in which employees' responses to change are shaped (Piderit, 2000).

In this article, we explicitly choose an interdisciplinary approach, combining insights from both the public administration and the change management literature streams. Our main goal is to quantitatively examine those factors that influence the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies. In this, we use the concept of change willingness (Metselaar, 1997) as a dependent variable. From public administration research, we draw on the policy alienation concept that consists of five dimensions: strategic powerlessness, tactical powerlessness, operational powerlessness, societal meaninglessness and client meaninglessness (Tummers et al., 2009). We test the relationships between these five dimensions and change willingness in a survey involving 478 Dutch psychiatrists, psychologists and psychotherapists implementing a new reimbursement policy.

The first contribution made by this article will be to the public administration literature on the experiences of public professionals with NPM. This field has often been characterised by qualitative research (for example Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Thomas & Davies, 2005), and only a limited number of studies use quantitative approaches. A notable exception is the work by some Norwegian academics (for instance Christensen & Laegreid, 2008). One of the strengths of *qualitative* research is that it can capture process-related features which are very relevant for studies on NPM and change. In general, *quantitative* research can help in hypothesis testing and statistical generalization. Quantitatively analyzing important research questions - such as the relationship between discretion and NPM (Brodkin, 2007) - can yield new insights, thereby adding to the debate. For instance, do many professionals really sense insufficient discretion when implementing NPM-like policies, as some authors claim (Van den Brink et al., 2006), or is the opposite closer to the truth: that NPM "underlined the need for decentralized decision-making and autonomy, which can be seen as favouring professionals" (Brandsen, 2009:263)? A quantitative approach can test existing relationships and thereby provide new insights to the debate concerning the experiences of NPM at the 'street-level', where policies are implemented.

The second contribution is to the change management literature concerning the public sector. Change management literature includes reviews of several aspects, including restructuring, reengineering, the introduction of new technology and Total Quality Management (Burke & Litwin, 1992). However, little attention has been given to the way in which public employees react to new public policies. This reflects the perception that most literature on organizational change and innovation has concentrated on major changes that affect private sector organizations (Kickert, 2010). In this article, we look specifically at the experiences of public professionals when dealing with public

policies, and thus draw on concepts from the public administration literature which fit this context.

This brings us to the outline of this article. In Section 2, we develop a theoretical framework and end the section with hypotheses concerning factors that may influence change willingness. In Section 3, the method established for testing these hypotheses is outlined. The results of the subsequent survey – including hypothesis testing - are shown in Section 4. We conclude by discussing the contribution of this article to the public administration literature and to the change management literature concerning the public sector.

6.2 Theoretical framework

This section firstly provides a background on the study of professionals and their experiences with NPM. Next, we will review insights from the change management literature, focusing on the concept of change willingness. Third, we will introduce the policy alienation concept. We will then connect change willingness and policy alienation, resulting in five hypotheses.

6.2.1 Background: professions, professionalism and NPM

The concept of profession is a contested one (Eraut, 1994; Evetts, 2003). A number of scholars (such as T. Parsons, 1964) have attempted to list a number of defining characteristics which distinguish professions from non-professions. However, others have noted that there is no general consensus about these defining characteristics and, instead, have offered a list of relevant occupational groups, such as medical specialists and lawyers (Abbott, 1988; Hanlon, 1998).

Closely related to the contested concept of profession is 'professionalism'. Durkheim (1992 [1957]) saw professionalism as a form of moral community based on occupational membership. Eraut (1994) treats professionalism as an ideology embodying values such as integrity and autonomy. By looking at the content of the work, Schön (1983) observed that professionalism can be defined using what he calls the 'model of technical rationality' (Noordegraaf, 2007). Viewed in this light, professionalism is about applying general, scientific knowledge to particular cases in a rigorous, routine way (Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 1994). Hence, different conceptualizations of professions and professionalism seem to co-exist.

In contemporary society – including the public sector – the concepts of profession and professionalism are still debated and remain highly relevant. Alongside traditional professions such as medicine and law, other occupations try to 'professionalize' themselves such as managers (Van Bockel & Noordegraaf, 2006) and consultants (Alvesson & Johansson, 2002). For the workers themselves, such professionalization can be beneficial, for example by

establishing occupational closure, that is closing off entry to everyone apart from those suitably qualified (Abbott, 1988). Alongside these 'internal' demands, groups outside the occupation also stimulate professionalization, for instance when they demand 'evidence-based' knowledge.

However, at the same time, professions have to face numerous pressures which contradict the ideals of professionalism. These pressures can come from various sources, such as changes in their organizations, and in economic or political viewpoints. As a result, some professions are thought to be experiencing a reduction in their autonomy and dominance (Evetts, 2003:369). In a similar vein, Krause (1996) argued, based on a large comparative study, that professions were experiencing a decline in their power relative to that of state and capitalist institutions.

In public domains, an important source of pressure on professionalism is the introduction of 'New Public Management' (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). NPM focuses on business-like values, such as efficiency, transparency and client choice. As noted in the introduction, professionals might see it as problematic if these values dominate over traditional professional values such as autonomy and equity. These changing contexts can affect and constrain professional work (Noordegraaf, 2007).

However, it would be unwarranted to claim that NPM is viewed as negative for all professions under all circumstances. For instance, Noordegraaf (2007:763) notes that 'these very same evidence-based and outcome-oriented movements are also used to professionalize quasi-, proto- or semi- professional occupations, such as social work and nursing'. Hence, the relationship between New Public Management and professionals is more complex than a simple 'clash of cultures' between managerialism and professionalism (cf. Raelin, 1986).

The discussion above provides us with a background for the research problem assessed in this article, showing the context in which the implementation by public professionals of NPM policies nowadays takes place. As NPM is not by definition welcomed by professionals, it seems important to examine the ways in which professionals react to its introduction. Change management explicitly examines the way changes – in this case a NPM policy - are assessed by workers in an organization. We therefore now look at the change management literature, and relate it to insights from the sociology of professions literature.

6.2.2 Change management and change willingness

Early change management theories were based on the assumption that organizational change can be successfully planned by change managers. These

are referred to as 'planned change' theories, and are often based on the seminal work of Lewin (1951). Lewin conceptualized change as progressing through successive phases labelled unfreezing, moving and refreezing. Building on this early work, others have described multi-phase models that change agents can follow in implementing changes (see Judson, 1991).

The planned change approach dominated the theory and practice of change management until the early 1980s. Since then, an 'emergent' change approach has become more prominent (Kickert, 2010). The emergent change approach does not consider change as a linear process, or an isolated event, but sees change as continuous, recursive and unpredictable. Change appears to be unplanned and unexpected (Weick, 2000). That is, there is no deliberate orchestration of change, no dramatic discontinuity and no definitive steps in the change.

Although the planned and the emergent change approaches differ considerably, they both stress that willingness to implement a change by employees is crucial. Metselaar (1997:42) defines this change willingness as "a positive behavioral intention towards the implementation of modifications in an organization's structure, or work and administrative processes, resulting in efforts from the organization member's side to support or enhance the change process." According to planned change theories, an absence of willingness would result in top management's intentions to instil a change not being transformed into real change efforts by lower echelons (Judson, 1991). According to this emergent school, unwillingness would impede the process of endless modifications, which would no longer accumulate and amplify. Indeed, throughout change management history is has been fairly unambiguously claimed that a crucial condition for success is that employees are willing to implement the change (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Judson, 1991).

When we relate the study of professions to change willingness – or rather resistance to change – we note that resistance can sometimes be understood as a way to counter attacks on the profession. For example, when a new change confronts the exclusive rights to insist on a specific education and to select only occupational members (in essence a measure countering occupational closure), professionals may for these very reasons oppose the change. When this happens, the discourse on professionalism can be used by the occupational groups as an instrument to counter occupational change and social control (Evetts, 2006:141). In this article, we use the concept of change willingness to examine the willingness of public professionals to implement a particular NPM policy.

6.2.3 Policy alienation

For factors that possibly influence change willingness, we turn to the dimensions of a concept taken from public administration research: policy alienation. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented, in this instance by a public professional who regularly interacts directly with clients (Tummers et al., 2009). First, we will give a short overview of the background to alienation.

Alienation broadly refers to a sense of social estrangement, an absence of social support or meaningful social connection. Its use in scientific literature can be traced directly to Hegel and Marx, who both saw capitalism as the main cause of alienation. Sociologists, public administration scholars and other social scientists have since used the alienation concept in various studies. As a result, a number of meanings have been attributed to the term (Kanungo, 1982:24). In an attempt to provide clarity, Seeman (1959) – in a landmark article - broke these meanings down into five alienation dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement. Given that there is no theoretical structure linking the five dimensions and that the presence of all the dimensions is not required, scholars are effectively free to choose which dimensions best fit their research context (Rayce et al., 2008).

Many scholars have used such classifications to devise operational measures for alienation so that they can examine the concept in diverse settings. Rayce et al. (2008), when investigating adolescent alienation, used three of the five dimensions. Further, researchers have used Seeman's classification to examine work alienation (such as Blauner, 1964). In this article, we use Seeman's classification for examining the policy alienation concept.

How can the concept of alienation be linked to the world of policy implementation? Public policies refer to the binding allocation of values, for society as a whole, in a situation of structural scarcity due, for example, to a lack of financial or natural resources (Easton, 1965). As a result, trade-offs occur between these values, for example between efficiency and equity (Stone, 2003). This is why street-level public servants are sometimes able to make their own judgements on an appropriate trade-off when applying a policy to an individual case, such as when a police officer decides whether to impose an on-the-spot fine (Lipsky, 1980). When professional case workers have to implement a policy, many such trade-off situations will arise. These public professionals, as members of professional communities or associations, also have to accommodate professional norms and standards.

Policy alienation is multidimensional, consisting of powerlessness and meaninglessness dimensions (for a more elaborate explanation, see Tummers,

2009). In essence, powerlessness is a person's lack of control over events in their life. Meaninglessness, on the other hand, is the inability to comprehend the relationship of one's contribution with a larger purpose. Professionals can feel powerless while implementing a policy, for example if they have no influence over the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards they issue (Lipsky, 1980). Further, it is also evident that professionals can feel that implementing a policy is meaningless, if, for example, it does not deliver any apparent beneficial outcomes for society (Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). To make the dimensions more specific to the situation being studied, we distinguish between strategic, tactical and operational powerlessness, and between societal and client meaninglessness. The definitions of these dimensions are shown in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Operationalization of policy alienation: Five dimensions

Dimension	*Definition*	*An example situation leading to a high score*
Strategic powerlessness	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as is captured in rules and regulations.	A professional feeling that the policy is drafted without the help of implementing professionals or professional associations.
Tactical powerlessness	The professionals' perceived influence on decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within their own organisation.	Professionals stating that the managers in the organization did not consult them or their colleagues when designing the implementation process for the policy.
Operational powerlessness	The perceived degree of freedom in making choices concerning the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards on offer when implementing the policy.	Answering 'fully agree' to a survey question on whether the professional feels that their autonomy during the implementation process was lower than it should be.
Societal meaninglessness	The perception of professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals.	Stating in an interview that 'I agree with the policy goal of enhancing transparency, but I do not see how this policy helps in achieving this goal."
Client meaninglessness	The professionals' perceptions of the added value of their implementing a policy for their own clients.	A professional noting that a particular policy seriously impinges on their clients' privacy.

What value is added by using the policy alienation concept? First, the policy alienation concept adds to the literature by framing the experiences of public professionals with new policies in a coherent theoretical framework. Indeed, although some prominent policy implementation scholars have emphasized the crucial role of committed implementers (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May &

Winter, 2009), few have developed and tested a framework for analyzing this topic (O'Toole, 2000). Further, studies on professions and professionalism (Eraut, 1994; Evetts, 2003; Freidson, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007) have been insightful on the reactions of professionals to change. However, these studies have not focused specifically on experiences with public policies. Hence, the policy alienation framework is innovative by providing a coherent theoretical framework for understanding the attitudes of public professionals towards policies. Second, it is one of the few concepts used in the debate on the experiences of professionals with NPM policies that has been quantified using a psychometrically sound approach (DeVellis, 2003; Tummers, 2009). As such, it is well-matched to the goal of quantitatively examining factors that influence the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies.

6.2.4 Policy alienation and related concepts

Having conceptualized policy alienation, we can now indicate how it differs from a number of related concepts: work alienation, professionalism, autonomy and role conflicts.

First, policy alienation has similarities with, but also differs from, the work alienation concept. One similarity is that policy alienation research, as with most work alienation research, focuses on alienation as perceived by the worker (Kanungo, 1982:19). An important difference is that it looks at alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. Secondly, it focuses on the public sector, whereas the work alienation concept was primarily developed for the private sector. This is, for example, shown by the dimension societal meaninglessness, which examines a policy's perceived added value for societal goals.

Second, the concept of policy alienation also differs from 'professionalism'. Indeed, professionalism can be considered as a possible factor influencing certain dimensions of policy alienation (see also Tummers, Steijn et al., forthcoming 2012). This can be illustrated by looking at two indicators of professionalism: a strong professional association and a high status profession (Eraut, 1994). Looking at professional associations, it is argued that they can legitimize change by hosting a process of discourse through which change is debated and endorsed (Greenwood et al., 2002). If professional associations are sufficiently powerful, they can significantly influence policies. Conversely, when professional associations are not considered crucial for the implementation process, they could be bypassed by policy developers. As a result, professionals might feel powerless on the strategic level and, because of this, will be alienated from the policy. Therefore, stronger professional associations have the potential to decrease the strategic powerlessness of public professionals. Further, the

status of a profession can influence policy alienation. Professions with a lower status – such as school teachers and social workers - have greater difficulty in retaining some discretion when implementing a policy. Bucher and Stelling (1969:4) argue that 'the reward [for professional status] is autonomy and influence: the group is accorded the competence to define problems, determine solutions and monitor the functioning of the system.' Therefore, we would expect public professionals to experience less policy alienation when the status of their profession is higher.

Third, policy alienation differs from the notion of professional autonomy or, more specifically, from discretion (Lipsky, 1980). Discretion is one of the sub-dimensions of policy alienation, and the counterpart of operational powerlessness. If one was to plot operational powerlessness on a continuum, full discretion would be at one extreme and full operational powerlessness at the other.

Finally, policy alienation is also distinct from the role conflict concept. When implementing a policy, professionals will experience demands based on various logics, such as the logic of their manager, of their clients and of the policy. These logics all have different values, and role conflicts will arise when professionals perceive these logics as incompatible. Role conflicts can best be seen as an effect of a number of the dimensions of policy alienation (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; Organ & Greene, 1981).

6.2.5 Policy alienation and change willingness

We can now examine the expected relationship between the various policy alienation dimensions and change willingness.

Powerlessness and change willingness

When change management scholars examine powerlessness, they often use related concepts such as influence, power and participation (Bouma, 2009). It is well-established that an increase in employee influence on change decisions – or reduced powerlessness - leads to increased commitment and performance, and reduces resistance to change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). The mechanism which relates influence to change willingness can be traced back to the human relations movement (McGregor, 1960). For instance, Sagie and Koslowsky (1994) reported on influence in decision-making being positively related to acceptance among individual employees from five Israeli public organizations.

We can apply these findings in relating the powerlessness dimensions to change willingness. Looking at strategic powerlessness, we would expect that the more public professionals – as a professional group – experience an influence in the drafting of a policy, the more they will be willing to implement

it. Here, the individual public professionals do not have to experience this influence directly, they can sense an influence if others, such as their professional associations, appear to have fruitfully represented them in the debate. This can lead to an increase in the willingness to implement public policies (Bouma, 2009; Greenwood et al., 2002; Wagner III, 1994). As such, this dimension often concerns indirect, rather than direct, power.

However, an observation should be made here. In the literature on the sociology of professions, there are arguments about re-stratification within professions. Freidson (1994:9) describes re-stratification as follows "Professionalism is being reborn in a hierarchical form in which everyday practitioners become subject to the control of professional elites who continue to exercise the considerable technical, administrative, and cultural authority that professions have had in the past." Hence, everyday professionals are different and disconnected from the professional elites, who represent them in their associations. When professional associations or other elite groupings have influence on a strategic level, this might not increase the willingness of the 'everyday' professionals to implement a policy program. This means that the hypothesis developed above – that less strategic powerlessness leads to a greater willingness to implement a policy program – might not hold. We will review if this is the case in our empirical analysis.

The tactical level is most closely related to mainstream change management literature. Here, it is expected that the more professionals experience that they cannot influence the way the policy is implemented within their organization, the less they will be willing to implement the new policy. This influence might be both direct and indirect. Direct participation takes place, for instance, when a professional belongs to a working group set up to help determine organizational rules to match a new policy, or when a professional informally influences executives responsible for an implementation. Indirectly, professionals can feel powerful when colleagues represent them and influence the way that the policy is implemented in their organization.

Finally, greater operational powerlessness – or less discretion - is also expected to be negatively related to change willingness. In the policy implementation literature, it is suggested that an important factor in the attitudes of street-level public servants is the extent to which organizations delegate decision-making authority to the frontline (Meier & O'Toole, 2002). This influence may be particularly pronounced in professionals whose expectations of discretion and autonomy contradict notions of bureaucratic control (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005).

To sum up, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Strategic powerlessness will be negatively related to change willingness.
H2: Tactical powerlessness will be negatively related to change willingness.
H3: Operational powerlessness will be negatively related to change willingness.

Meaninglessness and change willingness

In the change management literature, the notion of 'case for change' is closely related to the meaninglessness concept. In both theory and practice, it is often noted that a case for change has to be vehemently made if it is to increase change willingness (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). This case for change can stress that there are better ways of doing things - better for the organization, better for the employees and better for customers. Developing a case for change is often an important step in planned change approaches. For instance, Higgs and Rowland (2005:127) note that creating a case for change is the first area of leadership competency to be associated with successful change implementation. If employees agree that a change has good and necessary objectives, they should be more supportive of this change.

We can use these findings in relating the meaninglessness dimensions to change willingness. A clear case for change has to be made which stresses (a) the contribution of the policy to society (on the societal level) and (b) the contribution of the policy to the clients of the professionals (on the client level).

First, we would expect that the greater the societal meaninglessness that public professionals experience, the less they will be willing to implement a policy. When professionals perceive high societal meaninglessness, they are sensing that a policy program is not actually dealing with the provision of desirable public services, such as financial protection and security. As a result, they might wonder why they have to implement such a policy. That is, the case for change on the societal level is unclear to them. This may lead them to resist the new policy, and exhibit a low change willingness (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Second, greater client meaninglessness is also expected to negatively influence willingness to change. May and Winter (2009) found that if frontline workers perceive the instruments they have at their disposal for implementing a policy as ineffective, in terms of delivering to their clients, this is likely to add to their frustrations. They do not see how their implementation of the policy helps their clients, and so wonder why they should implement it. Given that the evaluation of effectiveness is likely to be based on on-the-job experience, rooted in the circumstances that professionals encounter in doing their job, this aspect of attitude is likely to be particularly important when it comes to determining attitudes and behaviors (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003).

Overall, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Societal meaninglessness will be negatively related to change willingness.

H5: Client meaninglessness will be negatively related to change willingness.

6.2.6 The proposed theoretical model

Figure 6.1 shows the overall theoretical model representing the hypotheses developed above. In the following sections, we present the methodology for testing this model and our empirical results.
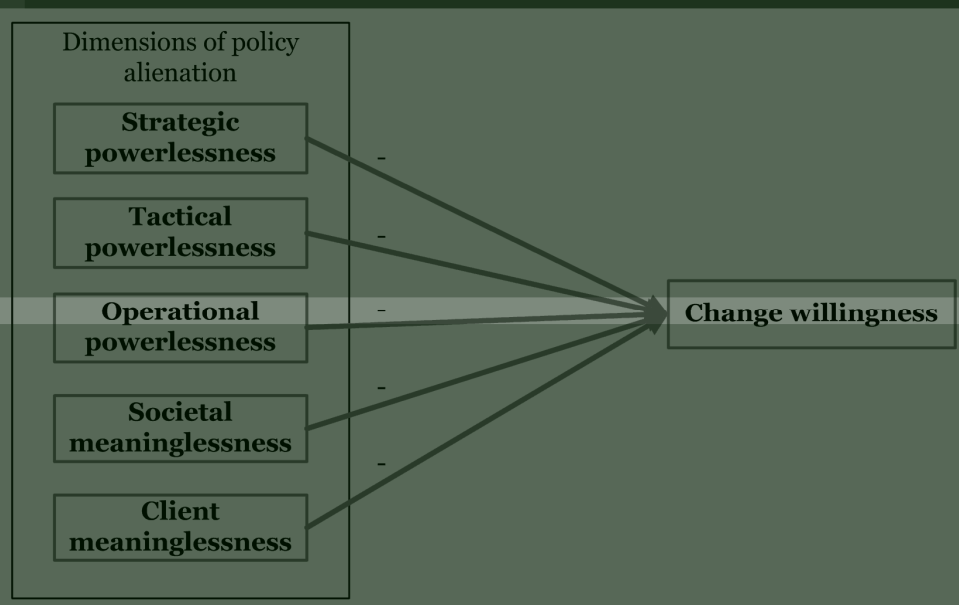
Figure 6.1 The proposed theoretical model

6.3 Method

6.3.1 Testing the proposed model using the DRG policy

To test the proposed model, we undertook a survey of Dutch mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. First, we provide a short overview of this policy.

In January 2008, the Dutch government introduced Diagnoses Related Groups in mental healthcare. This was part of a process to convert the Dutch healthcare system into one based on a regulated market. The system of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs, in Dutch Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, or DBC's) was developed as a means of determining the level of financial exchange for mental healthcare provision. The DRG-policy differs significantly from the former method, in which each medical action resulted in a financial claim. This meant that, the more sessions that a professional caregiver (a psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist) had with a patient, the more

recompense that could be claimed. This former system was considered by some to be inefficient (Kimberly et al., 2009). The DRG-policy changed the situation by stipulating a *standard* rate for each disorder. The new Law Health Market Organization and the associated DRGs can be seen as the introduction of regulated competition into Dutch healthcare, a move in line with NPM ideas. More specifically, it can be seen as a shift to greater competition and more efficient resource use (Hood, 1991:5).

We chose the DRG policy as the basis for testing our model for three reasons. Firstly, public professionals, here psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists, will be the ones implementing the policy, and this is an essential aspect as the model concept is designed to further the debate on the experiences of public professionals with NPM policies. Secondly, the DRG policy focuses strongly on economic goals, such as efficiency and client choice (Helderman, Schut, Van Der Grinten, & Van De Ven, 2005), and earlier research on the sociology of professions indicates that it is policies which pursue these kinds of NPM goals that create problems for professionals. As such, this policy fits the research problem in hand. Thirdly, in numerous countries, there have been moves towards similar healthcare payment systems. In the early 1980s, Diagnostic Related Groups (DRGs) were developed in the USA to calculate cost prices for health 'products'. Since then, variants of the DRG system have been developed in Australia, Germany, England, Japan, Sweden, Belgium and the Netherlands (Kimberly et al., 2009). This increases the possibility of generalizing the results of the analysis.

6.3.2   Sampling and response

We used a sample of 1,800 mental healthcare professionals, randomly selected from the databases of two nationwide mental healthcare associations. We received 478 full or partial returns of our questionnaire. Of those who did not complete the survey, 204 provided reasons. The majority (157) did not work with DRGs for various reasons, such as DRGs were not yet implemented in their organisation, or because their particular profession, such as primary healthcare, did not use DRGs. The next most frequent reason offered was that they had retired or changed occupation (given by 17 respondents). The overall response rate was thus 29%.

Of the valid respondents, 138 (29%) were men and 340 (71%) women. This balance is consistent with Dutch averages for mental health care professionals, where one can find figures as high as 69% of the workforce being women (Palm et al., 2008). The respondents' ages ranged from 23 to 90 years (M = 48), which is a slightly older average than the Dutch national average for mental healthcare professionals (M = 44). Hence, the respondents mean age

and gender-distribution are similar to those of the overall mental healthcare sector. Nevertheless, no matter how similar the respondents appear to the population in terms of demographic variables, we cannot rule out a possible non-response bias since the non-respondents may differ in terms of numerous other characteristics from the respondents. Finally, we found that the educational level was very high: 21% having studied at an academic level (a bachelor's degree) and 79% having undertaken postgraduate level training or education (PhD or a specialisation). This is a clear indicator that we have indeed sampled professionals who, in general, have a high educational level (Freidson, 2001).

6.3.3　Measures

Constructing scales for policy alienation

To be able to measure the identified dimensions of policy alienation, we followed four main steps (for an elaborated discussion on scale development see Tummers, 2009).

First, for each dimension, ten items were generated. These were formatted using five-point Likert scales, with allowable responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We used templates in constructing these items. Templates allow the researcher to specify an item by replacing general phrases with more specific ones that better fit the research context. For example, instead of stating 'the policy' or 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items using the specific policy and group of professionals which are being examined, here 'the DRG policy' and 'mental healthcare professionals' replaced the template terms. This makes it easier for professionals to understand items, as they are better tailored to their context and this, in turn, increases reliability and content validity (DeVellis, 2003:62).

Second, to further increase content validity, twenty-one experts examined the initial pool of potential items. These experts were selected for their range of different expertise, including for example quantitative methodologists and mental healthcare specialists (DeVellis, 2003:75). After each expert discussion, we added or discarded certain items based on comments received. At the end of this process, we ended with what can be seen as the six most appropriate items for each dimension. Harvey et al. (1985 in Hinkin, 1998) recommend having at least four items for each scale so that one can test the homogeneity of the items within each latent construct.

We included the items developed in the second step in our survey. After conducting the survey, we then used principle components analysis with an oblique rotation to identify groups of items. Based on this analysis, we chose the

best-fitting items for each dimension of policy alienation. The resulting scales are shown in Appendix 2, and discussed below.

Fourthly, we conducted tests to establish the construct validity of the policy alienation scales. Construct validity is 'the extent to which a measure "behaves" the way that its construct it purports to measure should behave with regard to established measures of other constructs' (DeVellis, 2003:53). First, we examined the convergent validity (one form of construct validity): seeking evidence of similarity between measures of theoretically-related constructs. The convergent validity tests show that policy alienation behaves as expected from theory. It correlates significantly and in the expected direction with measures to which it is theoretically related, such as change willingness (r=-.59, p<.01), job satisfaction (r=-.18, p<.01) and role conflicts (r=.60, p<.01). Second, we looked at the discriminant validity (another type of construct validity): the absence of correlation between measures of presumed unrelated constructs. The discriminant validity tests show that policy alienation does not correlate with those measures it was not expected to strongly correlate with, such as gender (-.05, n.s.), the number of people working in the institution (.06, n.s.) and working as a freelance or in an institution (.01, n.s.). Given the satisfactory construct validity tests, we can be more confident that we really are measuring policy alienation with this measurement method.

Powerlessness

Strategic powerlessness was measured using three items, which sought to elicit information about the perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as is captured in rules and regulations. A sample items on the scale was 'In my opinion, mental healthcare professionals had too little power to influence the DRG policy'. The results from the present study had a Cronbach's alpha of .74.

Tactical powerlessness was assessed using a six-item scale. These items tap into a professional's perceived influence on decisions concerning the way the DRG policy was implemented in their institution. A sample items was 'In my institution, especially mental healthcare professionals could decide how the DRG policy was implemented (R: reverse item)'. This scale's Cronbach alpha was .86.

Operational powerlessness looks at the discretion of a professional while implementing a policy (Lipsky, 1980). A sample items was 'When I work with DRGs, I have to adhere to tight procedures'. The scale used had six items and a Cronbach alpha of .82.

Meaninglessness

Societal meaninglessness reflects the perceptions of professionals concerning the added value of a policy to socially relevant goals. Based on expert interviews, we concluded that DRGs had three main goals: 1. increasing transparency in costs and quality of mental health care, 2. increasing efficiency and, finally, 3. increasing patient choice among mental healthcare providers. Sample items were 'I think that the DRG policy, in the long term, will lead to transparency in the costs of healthcare' (R) and 'Overall, I think that the DRG regulations lead to greater efficiency in mental healthcare' (R). The Cronbach alpha of this scale was .95.

Client meaninglessness here refers to the perceptions of professionals about the added value of them implementing the DRG policy for their own clients. For instance, do they perceive that they are really helping their patients by implementing this policy? A sample items was 'The DRG policy is contributing to the welfare of my patients' (R). The Cronbach alpha of this scale was .91.

Change willingness

We measured change willingness using a validated five-item scale which has shown good reliability (Metselaar, 1997). This scale uses templates in which one can specify the change being assessed. As such, sample items are: 'I am willing to contribute to the introduction of DRGs' and 'I am willing to free up time to implement the DRG policy'. The scale's Cronbach's alpha was .85.

Control variables

Alongside the variables described above, we included commonly used control variables in our regression: gender, age, occupation and management position (yes/no). That is, any differences due to these variables are controlled for in the analyses.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in the study

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex	0.71	0.46												
2. Age	47.97	10.89	-.24**											
3. Occupation researcher	0.04	0.19	-.04	-.24**										
4. Occupation psychologist	0.74	0.44	.19**	-.07	-.31**									
5. Occupation psychotherapist	0.45	0.50	-.05	.43**	-.18**	.16**								
6. Occupation psychiatrist	0.17	0.37	-.22**	.12*	-.06	-.74**	-.28**							
7. Management position	0.27	0.45	-.17**	.09	-.07	-.19**	-.10*	.29**						
8. Strategic powerlessness	3.75	0.82	.01	.15**	-.08	.01	.24**	-.02	.03					
9. Tactical powerlessness	3.60	0.78	.06	.16**	-.07	.08	.18**	-.03	-.07	.38**				
10. Operational powerlessness	3.48	0.77	.01	.01	.08	-.06	.01	.05	-.01	.29**	.33**			
11. Societal meaninglessness	3.84	0.72	-.10	.27**	-.04	-.08	.24**	.14**	.03	.23**	.26**	.35**		
12. Operational meaninglessness	4.28	0.71	-.10*	.15**	.00	-.01	.12*	.09	.02	.24**	.24**	.37**	.67**	
13. Change willingness	2.53	0.81	.13*	-.18**	-.04	.08	-.09	-.14**	.08	-.21**	-.25**	-.38**	-.59**	-.51**

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01

As can be seen in Table 6.2, all bivariate correlations for the variables linked through our hypotheses were statistically significant and in the anticipated direction. For example, change willingness was negatively related to strategic powerlessness.

Self-reported data based on a single application of a questionnaire can result in inflated relationships between variables due to common method variance, i.e. variance that is due to the measurement method rather than the constructs themselves (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). We conducted a Harman one-factor test to evaluate the extent to which common method variance was a concern. A factor analysis was conducted on all 46 items used to measure the variables covered by the hypotheses. The factors together accounted for 70% of the total variance (using the 'eigenvalue > 1' criterion). The most significant factor did not account for a majority of the variance (only 32%). Given that no single factor emerged and the first factor did not account for a majority of the variance, common method variance does not seem to be a major concern here.

6.5   Regression results

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the extent to which the various dimensions of policy alienation were able to predict change willingness. In the first model, we regressed change willingness onto the control variables. In the subsequent models, we added strategic powerlessness (model 2), tactical powerlessness (model 3), operational powerlessness (model 4), societal meaninglessness (model 5) and client meaninglessness (model 6). In each step, the change in R^2 is calculated, and we determine whether each change is significantly different from zero. In the first model, with only control variables in the equation, the R^2 was .07 (F=3.89, p<.01). Adding strategic powerlessness scores in the second model increased R^2 to .13. On inserting the other dimensions in the subsequent models, the R^2 increased further, to .41 in model 6. Thus, the combination of the various dimensions of policy alienation contributed considerably to change willingness as experienced by public professionals. We can now consider the individual hypotheses in more detail.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that the degree of strategic powerlessness experienced by public professionals will be negatively related to their willingness to implement DRGs. As Table 6.3 shows, when we look at the final model, strategic powerlessness is not significantly related to change willingness. After including the other dimensions of policy alienation, the unique contribution of strategic powerlessness becomes insignificant. That is, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that the degree of tactical powerlessness will be negatively related to change willingness. The direct effect of tactical

powerlessness on change willingness was insignificant (β=.04 p=n.s.). Hence, once again, the results did not support our hypothesis.

The third hypothesis looks at the influence of operational powerlessness on change willingness. As could be expected from the public administration literature, the results indicate that a greater sense of operational powerlessness (or less autonomy) does indeed lower the willingness to change (β=-.15 p<.01).

Hypothesis 4 examines the influence of societal meaninglessness on change willingness. In our empirical analysis, this relationship is strong (β=-.39 p<.01). That is, when professionals do not see a value in a policy in terms of achieving relevant social goals, they are less willing to implement it.

Lastly, Hypothesis 5 looks at the relationship between client meaninglessness and change willingness. The empirical results support the hypothesized relationship: if public professionals feel that a policy does not add value for their clients, they are less inclined to put effort into its implementation (β=-.16 p<.01).

Table 6.3 Hierarchical regression analyses for variables predicting change willingness

	Model 1 *Incl. control variables*	Model 2 *Incl. strategic powerlessness*	Model 3 *Incl. tactical powerlessness*	Model 4 *Incl. operational powerlessness*	Model 5 *Incl. societal meaninglessness*	Model 6 *Incl. client meaninglessness*
Female	.07	.08	.09	.09	.08	.07
Male	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.
Age	**-.15***	**-.14***	-.12	**-.14***	-.07	-.07
Occupation researcher	**-.17***	**-.17***	**-.16***	**-.13***	-.09	-.08
Occupation psychologist	-.19	-.19	-.16	-.17	-.10	-.08
Occupation psychotherapist	-.10	-.05	-.03	-.05	-.06	.05
Occupation psychiatrist	**-.32****	**-.31****	**-.29****	**-.28****	-.14	-.12
Managing position	**.14***	**.14***	**.13***	**.13***	**.12***	**.12****
Non-management position	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.	Ref.cat.
Strategic powerlessness		**-.20****	**-.14***	-.08	-.06	-.04
Tactical powerlessness			**-.17****	-.09	-.04	-.04
Operational powerlessness				**-.31****	**-.17****	**-.15****
Societal meaninglessness					**-.49****	**-.39****
Client meaninglessness						**-.16****
ΔR²		.04	.02	.08	.18	.01
F for ΔR²		11.75**	7.56**	28.70**	78.39**	5.69**
Overall R²	.09	.12	.14	.23	.40	.41
Overall F	3.89**	4.99**	5.39**	8.22**	16.79**	16.14**

Note: Beta coefficients are presented. * p < .05 ** p < .01.
The following criteria are met:
Criterion of independent residuals (Durbin-Watson 2, 1<criterion<3). Criterion of no multicollinearity (No VIF values above 10 and average close to 1). No exclusion of influential outlying cases was required (using casewise diagnostics: 4.7% above standardized residual >|2|, Cook's distance max. 0.05 (criterion < 1). Criteria of homoscedasticity and normality met.

6.6 DISCUSSION: STUDY RESULTS AND LIMITATIONS

Our main goal has been to quantitatively examine factors that influence the willingness, or reluctance, of public professionals to implement new policies. Based on literature from the change management and public administration streams, a theoretical model was constructed linking five dimensions of policy alienation to change willingness. This model was tested in a survey of 478 mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. The model worked adequately in that the policy alienation dimensions, together with conventional control variables, explained over 40% of the variance in change willingness. The high internal consistency values (Cronbach alphas ranging from .74 to .95) and the satisfaction of regression criteria strengthens the reliability and validity of the study. As such, we can conclude that the quantitative, interdisciplinary, approach worked satisfactorily and adds to the literature on change management in the public sector. Having reached this conclusion, we can now summarize the results of the study, highlight some of the limitations and make consequent suggestions for future research.

Firstly, we examine the results of the study. After hypothesis testing, we can construct Figure 6.2, showing those relationships which proved significant. We see that greater strategic or tactical powerlessness do not decrease change willingness, unlike greater operational powerlessness (or less autonomy). This means that the more mental healthcare professionals have the feeling that they have little autonomy when implementing the DRG policy, the less supportive they will be towards this policy. The most important factor in explaining change willingness turned out to be societal meaninglessness: the perception of professionals concerning the added value of a policy to socially relevant goals. Further, when professionals have the feeling that the DRG policy is not contributing to the welfare of their own clients, their willingness to implement this policy again decreases. In the concluding section, we will discuss what these results mean for the debate on the experiences of public professionals with NPM policies.
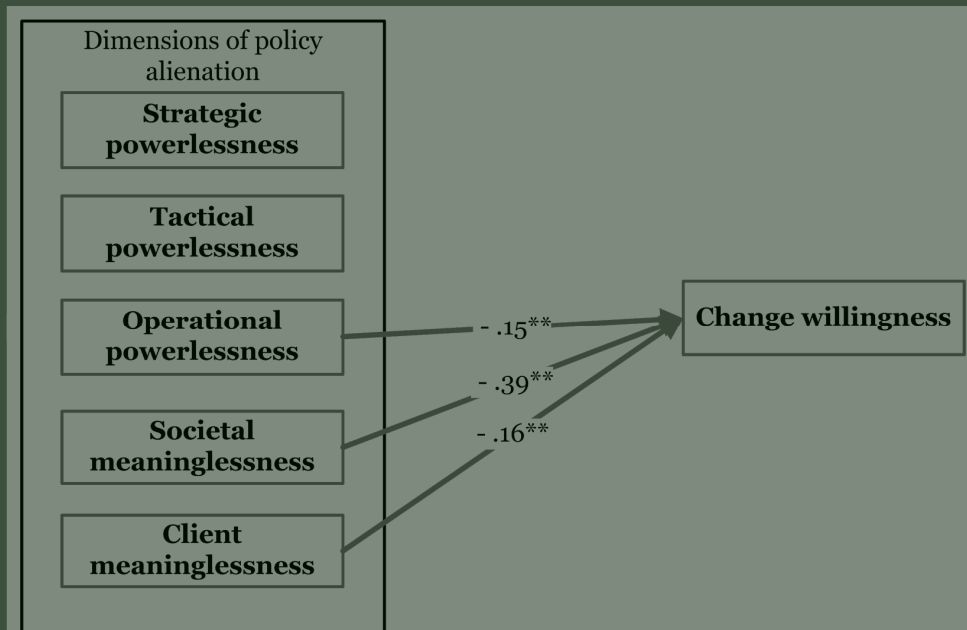
Figure 6.2 Final model, only paths that achieved significance at the .05 level or better are included

Like all studies, this study has a number of limitations. Here, we discuss two important limitations. Firstly, the results of this study, and the implications outlined, should be interpreted in light of the study's limited context and sample. Although the study's generalizability was improved by the fact that the sample included a large number of public professionals, working in different occupations, positions and places, one should be cautious in generalising this to other public-sector policies or domains. An area for further research would be to test the proposed model using other types of policies in a range of public domains. Here, a comparative approach might work adequately, examining different kinds of policies in various countries.

A second limitation concerns the possible influence of process-related factors, such as the speed of implementation and the way information was shared (how, when, with whom etc.). As noted in the introduction, process-related features are important when studying NPM implementations. Despite this, our cross-sectional quantitative study did not explicitly examine process-related factors. A fruitful direction for future research would therefore be to carry out a longitudinal study that explicitly takes into account – among other factors - the process of policy implementation. Such longitudinal studies are often expensive and complex to manage but they do have the potential to provide fresh insights into how important phenomena, such as professional resistance to the implementation of new policies, develop over time.

6.7   Conclusions

In the public administration literature, there is an intense debate on the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery. This debate has often looked specifically at the pressures professionals face when implementing NPM policies. Many public professionals are resistant to implementing these policies. In this article, we analyzed factors that influence this (un)willingness to implement public policies. Based on our empirical results, we can draw three conclusions, relevant to both public administration scholars and practitioners.

First, we observed that operational powerlessness strongly influences the willingness to implement new policies. In the public administration literature, such operational power is often referred to as discretion (when applied to street-level public servants) or autonomy (when talking about professionals) (Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012). Indeed, the notion of autonomy is widely viewed as one of the defining characteristics of professional work. This study is innovative as it quantitatively shows the important role of perceived autonomy during policy implementation. This adds significance to statements in the current debate on pressured professionals, where one sees claims made by leading authors such as Freidson (2001) that the autonomy of professionals is diminishing. Where this is indeed the case, this lowered autonomy could have consequences for the willingness to work with new policies. For policymakers, this means that they should be careful in reducing the autonomy of the public professionals implementing the policy. We are not saying that policymakers should never touch professional autonomy since autonomy may also have substantial disadvantages, such as empire building and inefficiency (Deakin, 1994; Lipsky, 1980). What we are warning is that diminishing the autonomy of professionals should be a deliberate, informed choice, taking account of the possible advantages and disadvantages.

Second, we observed that societal meaninglessness strongly influences willingness to change. Professionals in our survey who felt that the policy did not contribute to the stated goals (such as efficiency and transparency) were far less willing to implement the policy. This is an interesting observation as it contradicts some research on New Public Management which argues that business goals, such as efficiency, are almost by definition not welcomed by professionals (Emery & Giauque, 2003; Van den Brink et al., 2006). Conversely, in our study, it does not seem that professionals are against these business goals as such. Rather, the mental healthcare professionals were unwilling to implement a policy precisely because it would not achieve the business goals. On the basis of our findings, it is unwarranted to say that public professionals are against business goals as such. They are unwilling to implement an NPM policy not because it focuses on business goals, but because it will not achieve

those business goals. For policymakers and change agents implementing policies, this means that efficiency or transparency can indeed be seen as a valuable goal for a new policy. Therefore, such policymakers and change agents could more openly state that these are the goals being pursued and, further, they can try to include professionals in debates on how to achieve these goals.

Third, the change willingness of implementing professionals is more dependent on the perceived added value of the policy, for society and for their own clients, than on their own perceived influence on the strategic or tactical levels. This could be an indication that, for public professionals, it is more important to see the logic of a new policy than to have the feeling of being able to influence its shaping. This is an important observation in that increasing perceived influence may not be as 'powerful a lever' as some authors claim (for example Judson, 1991). Further, the non-significant influence of strategic powerlessness can be an indication of the re-stratification thesis, stating that 'everyday' professionals are different and disconnected from the elite representing them in their associations (Freidson, 2001). Overall, influence on strategic and tactical levels does not seem to have a direct effect on willingness to implement a policy, although indirect effects are possible (Bouma, 2009). Rather than focus on these powerlessness aspects, policymakers should centre their attention on the perceived meaninglessness of a policy for society or for the professionals' clients. Policymakers could think about ways to improve the perceived added value of a policy. One way could be to more intensively communicate the values associated with a policy, highlighting its urgency and the desired results. Further, pilots might be initiated before 'rolling out' a policy nationwide. This could improve the effectiveness of a policy, thereby increasing its perceived value.

Concluding, this study provides insights that help to understand why public professionals are reluctant to implement new policies. Embracing and further researching the attitudes of these professionals towards new policies should prove to be a timely and productive endeavour for both researchers and practitioners alike.

7

Moving beyond the policy? Effects of policy content, context and personality characteristics on willingness to implement public policies

Abstract

The willingness of public professionals to implement policy programmes is important for achieving policy performance. However, few scholars have developed and tested systematic frameworks to analyse this issue. In this study, we address this by building and testing an appropriate framework. The aims have been: (1) to build a three-factor model (policy content, organizational context and personality characteristics) for explaining willingness to implement policies; and (2) to quantitatively test the model through a survey of Dutch professionals. The results show that policy content is the most important factor in explaining willingness. Nevertheless, organizational context and the personality characteristics of implementers also have a significant effect and should be considered when studying the attitudes of professionals towards policies. This research helps in understanding the willingness or resistance of professionals when it comes to implementing policies.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The implementation of public policies is still "alive and lively" (O'Toole, 2000: 263). An important issue in the study of policy implementation – based on the seminal work of Michael Lipsky (1980) – concerns the attitudes and behaviours of 'street-level bureaucrats' (see for instance Marinetto, 2011; M. J. Smith, Richards, Geddes, & Mathers, 2011). How responsive are these bureaucrats when they face new demands that are put forward by clients (Riccucci, 2005), by politicians that want to exercise political control (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003) or by public managers who also want to constrain the relative freedom of these bureaucrats (May & Winter, 2009)? The degree to which street-level bureaucrats are able to cope with these changing societal, political and managerial demands may to some extent explain their willingness or resistance in implementing new governmental policies addressing these demands.

The willingness, or alternatively resistance, of street-level bureaucrats to the implementation of public policies seems important when these bureaucrats are public professionals, especially if we consider the current debate concerning the pressures these professionals face when they are involved in service delivery processes (Freidson, 2001). For instance, asked to implement a new work disability decree in the Dutch social security system in 2004, about 240 insurance physicians urged a strike against this new policy, and some decided to quit their job. They could not align their professional values with the policy content (Tummers et al., 2009).

When public professionals are unwilling to implement policies, this may have serious consequences. First, it can decrease the effectiveness of policy implementation given that committed implementers are crucial for achieving policy goals (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004). Second, the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens may be affected, which may eventually influence the output legitimacy of government (Bekkers et al., 2007).

Although some prominent policy implementation scholars have emphasized the crucial role of the willingness of implementers to implement a policy (May & Winter, 2009; Riccucci, 2005; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), few have developed and tested a systematic framework for analyzing this topic (O'Toole, 2000). In this article, our goal is to construct and test a model for analyzing the willingness of public professionals to implement governmental policies. More specifically, we will examine how different factors influence this (un)willingness. The first factor in this model concerns the policy content and related discretion (the 'what') and is rooted in public administration literature. The second factor looks at the organizational context of the implementation (the 'where'), drawing primarily on change management literature. Third, we

examine the personality characteristics of the professionals (the 'who') based on insights from applied psychology. By including these three factors in one model, we combine insights from different bodies of knowledge. In so doing, we will answer the following research question:

What is the influence of (1) policy content and discretion, (2) organizational context and (3) personality characteristics on the willingness of public professionals to implement new public policies?

Next, we first discuss the theoretical framework, considering the relationships between the three proposed explanatory factors and the willingness to implement a policy. Second, we test the hypotheses developed in a survey among 1,317 Dutch psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists implementing a new reimbursement policy. Third, we will discuss the contribution of this study to the policy implementation literature and the debate on the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery.

7.2　Theoretical framework

7.2.1　Relevant backgrounds

We focus on the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies and the changes that these policies imply. In so doing, we draw – next to policy implementation and applied psychology research - on insights from change management literature, which has a long history of examining willingness or resistance to changes.

Early change management theories were based on the assumption that organizational change is linear (Judson, 1991). These are referred to as 'planned change' theories, and are often based on the seminal work of Lewin (1951). Since the early 1980s, however, an 'emergent change' approach has become more prominent. This approach does not view change as a linear process but sees change as a continuous, recursive and unpredictable process (Weick, 2000). Weick argued that the 'planned change' approach underestimates the value of innovative sense-making and the extent to which change is continuous and cumulative. The planned change approach resembles to some extent the top-down perspective on policy implementation (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1984). Here, implementation is defined as a rational process that can be planned, programd and controlled by policy formulators. The emergent change perspective resembles the bottom-up perspective on implementation. Bottom-up perspectives (Matland, 1995) define policy implementation as a dynamic and interactive process of coproduction, in which the personal

involvement of street-level bureaucrats helps to overcome resistance because the policies to be implemented fit with their needs.

Throughout change management history, it is has been fairly unambiguously claimed that a crucial condition for success is that employees are willing to implement the change (Judson, 1991). Metselaar (1997:42, see also Ajzen 1991) defines this change willingness as "a positive behavioral intention towards the implementation of modifications in an organization's structure, or work and administrative processes, resulting in efforts from the organization member's side to support or enhance the change process."

With respect to our research question, it is important to discover in which way 'willingness to change' influences the actual behavior of professionals. The concept of 'willingness to change' builds upon the seminal theory of planned behavior (for an elaborate discussion, see Ajzen, 1991). According to this theory, behavior is a function of intentions and perceived behavioral control. This means that a positive intention to act strongly influences behavior if someone believes they have control over their actions. For instance, when professionals want to put effort into policy implementation, and feel that they have the opportunity to do so, it is likely that they will put effort into policy implementation. Ajzen (1991:186) concludes that "As a general rule it is found that when behaviors pose no serious problems of control, they can be predicted from intentions with considerable accuracy". In this study, we use the 'willingness to change' concept, as developed by Metselaar (1997), to study the willingness of professionals to implement a new public policy as this concept builds upon the seminal theory of planned behavior and, further, its measurement has been validated in earlier research.

7.2.2 Building the theoretical framework

We have reviewed the literature in searching for concepts most likely to be related to willingness to implement new policies. The concepts we have included were chosen on the basis of three criteria (see also Judge, Thoresen, Pucik, & Welbourne, 1999): (a) there appeared to be a theoretical relationship between the concept and the willingness to implement new policies (b) that well-validated measures for the concepts existed; and (c) construct validity evidence existed for the concepts, and they had been successfully used in previous research.

By adopting this approach, this study is, with respect to this field, methodologically innovative. To date, most policy implementation studies have had a rather qualitative nature. O'Toole (2000:269) notes that "the move to multivariate explanation and large numbers of cases exposes the [policy implementation] specialty to new or renewed challenges, which have yet to be

addressed fully." One of the strengths of qualitative research is that it can capture process-related features which are very relevant for studies on policy implementation. Quantitatively analyzing important research questions can yield new insights, thereby adding to the debate. There has been undertaken some valuable quantitative research (May & Winter, 2009; Riccucci, 2005). However, these studies often did not use validated scales, although they sometimes did apply exploratory factor analyses and reliability techniques to test the quality of their scales. In contrast, we will use validated scales and have tested the selected variables in a large n-study.

In the following sections, we will examine variables that possibly influence the willingness to implement public policies. These variables are structured into three main factors: (1) the policy content and discretion; (2) the organizational context; and (3) personality characteristics. These factors have been shown to be theoretically important in explaining willingness to implement a change, such as a new policy (see also Herold, Fedor, & Caldwell, 2007).

Public administration scholars have primarily emphasized the policy content and discretion as determinants of attitudes and behavior of street-level bureaucrats (Winter, 2003a). For instance, Lipsky argues that a certain degree of discretion enables street-level bureaucrats, and other public professionals, to cope with the pressures they face. It is noted that effective policy implementation needs a policy structure that is not completely solidified by rules. A certain degree of discretion increases – among else - the willingness to implement a policy, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of implementation. Further, change management and applied psychology scholars stress factors concerning the organizational context and the personality characteristics of the implementers (Herold et al., 2007; Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007).

7.2.3　Factor 1: Policy content and discretion

First, we consider the content of the policy as determinant of the willingness to implement public policies. Based on the three criteria described above, we focus on the meaningfulness of a policy and the discretion available during its implementation.

Earlier research suggests a strong relationship between the meaningfulness of a policy – as perceived by professionals – and their willingness to implement it (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Matland, 1995). Ultimately, the goal of a public policy is to make a meaningful contribution to society, such as reducing crime rates or creating financial stability. For implementers, it is important to understand the contribution that a policy makes towards such goals (Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003). Meaninglessness occurs

when implementers are unable to comprehend the contribution of the policy to a greater purpose.

Three types of meaninglessness have been identified in earlier research (Holt et al., 2007; Tummers et al., 2009). Firstly, professionals will perceive a policy as meaningless if it fails to deliver any apparently beneficial outcomes for society as a whole. This is labelled *societal meaninglessness*, and is expected to decrease the willingness to implement a policy.

Secondly, *client meaninglessness* is also expected to negatively influence willingness to implement new policies. May and Winter (2009) found that, when frontline workers perceive the instruments they have at their disposal for implementing a policy to be ineffective for their clients, this is likely to frustrate them. They cannot see how the implementation of the proposed policy will help their clients, and therefore wonder why they should implement it.

Thirdly, we consider *personal meaninglessness*, which can be defined as a professional's perceptions that the implementation of a policy has no value for him- or herself. For instance, professionals may feel that a policy has added value for them if it increases their income, status or job security (see also Holt et al., 2007). We expect that the more professionals feel that a policy has added value for them, the more willing they will be to implement it.

Lastly, we examine the degree of discretion. We expect that when implementers experience more discretion when implementing a policy, they will be more willing to implement it (Hill & Hupe, 2009). This influence may be particularly pronounced in professionals whose expectations of discretion and autonomy contradict notions of bureaucratic control.

However, one should not ignore the reality that, when implementing a policy, implementers are in fact making policy. As Matland notes (1995:148) "Service deliverers ultimately determine policy". This means that, in addition to its possible indirect effect through willingness to implement, the amount of discretion directly affects policy performance. Hence, when implementers experience a lot of discretion, they might be more 'willing to implement' but, alternatively, might not implement the policy at all, using their discretion to shirk or sabotage (Brehm & Gates, 1999). The paradox is therefore that although we expect policy goals to be achieved (because implementers will be more willing to implement given their high discretion, and more willingness affects policy performance positively) this need not be the case. Hence, high discretion might well lead to low policy performance. Conversely, high discretion could lead to higher policy performance, with implementers using their discretion to adapt the policy to the local situation (Palumbo, Maynard-Moody, & Wright, 1984). These possibilities need to be taken into account when considering the

influence of discretion. In our case study, we will extensively review the role of discretion during policy implementation.

Based on the discussions above, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Societal meaninglessness will be negatively related to change willingness.
H2: Client meaninglessness will be negatively related to change willingness.
H3: Personal meaninglessness will be negatively related to change willingness.
H4: Discretion will be positively related to change willingness.

7.2.4 Factor 2: Organizational context

Alongside policy content, the organizational context can be an important determinant of the willingness to implement a new policy. In organization theory, it is argued that behavior and attitudes have to be understood in terms of the organizational environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 2006 [1967]). Based on the criteria presented in Section 2.2, we examine three aspects of the organizational context: the influence of professionals during organizational implementation, the subjective norm (attitude) of managers and the subjective norm of professional colleagues towards the policy.

Change management literature notes that an increase in *employee influence* on change decisions leads to increased commitment and performance, and reduces resistance to change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Judson (1991) notes that involving employees is perhaps the most powerful lever that management can use in order to gain acceptance of change. In the realm of policy implementation, we therefore expect that the more that professionals sense that they have a say in the way their organization constructs the policy, the more they will be willing to implement the new policy.

Next, we take into account the *subjective norm* towards the policy. A subjective norm can be defined as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform behavior" (Ajzen, 1991:188). This subjective norm is based on the attitudes of significant others towards behavior. The more positive these others are towards a certain behavior, the stronger should be a person's intention to perform that behavior. In the case of professionals implementing a policy, relevant others are their colleagues, their subordinates, their managers and their board of directors. Given the possible conflicts between professionals and managers surrounding policy implementation, we distinguish between the subjective norm of the managers (and their board of directors) and the subjective norm of the (non-managerial) professionals (colleagues and subordinates). We would expect that when professional colleagues are in favor of a new policy, this will positively contribute to a professional's willingness to implement it (see also Metselaar, 1997). Similarly, we also expect that when

professionals feel that the managers in their organization are in favor of the policy, this will positively influence their willingness to implement the policy. However, given the possible conflicts between managers and professionals with respect to policy implementation, it is also possible that a positive attitude by managers towards a policy will have a negative effect on the professionals' willingness to implement this policy. We will examine whether this is the case in our empirical analysis.

H5: Influence during organizational implementation will be positively related to change willingness.

H6: When managers are in favor of a policy, this will have a positive effect on change willingness.

H7: When professional colleagues are in favor of a policy, this will have a positive effect on change willingness.

7.2.5 Factor 3: Personality characteristics of the implementers

Lastly, we consider the personality characteristics of the professionals implementing a policy. Personality characteristics are often ignored in literature examining attitudes towards change, such as a new policy (Judge et al., 1999:107). Based on the criteria presented in Section 7.2.2, we examine two potentially relevant personality traits: rebelliousness and rule compliance.

Research involving *rebelliousness* – or psychological reactance – examines how individuals respond when their behavioral freedoms are restricted. Rebelliousness can be considered as a personality trait to the extent that some individuals interpret actions as a threat to their freedom more than others (Shen & Dillard, 2005). Scholars studying rebelliousness have shown that rebellious persons - compared with non-rebellious persons - are defensive, autonomous and non-affiliative (Dowd & Wallbrown, 1993). Further, rebelliousness has been found to be negatively related to readiness to change (Holt et al., 2007). Based on these studies, we expect rebellious individuals to be more resistant to implementing new policies.

Rule compliance is broadly defined as the belief of an individual that people have to obey governmental regulations (Clague, 2003). Rule compliance is related to, but logically independent of, rebelliousness. Rebelliousness examines an individual's proneness to see something as a threat to his or her own freedom. Rule compliance, on the other hand, examines the beliefs of that person that people (including themselves) should adhere to rules. We expect highly rule-compliant public professionals to be more willing to implement a new governmental policy, irrespective of its content.

Overall, it is hypothesized that:

H8: Rebelliousness will be negatively related to change willingness.

H9: Rule compliance will be positively related to change willingness.

7.2.6 Theoretical framework

Figure 7.1 shows the overall theoretical model representing the hypotheses developed above. In the sections that follow, we present the methodology used to test this model and our empirical results.
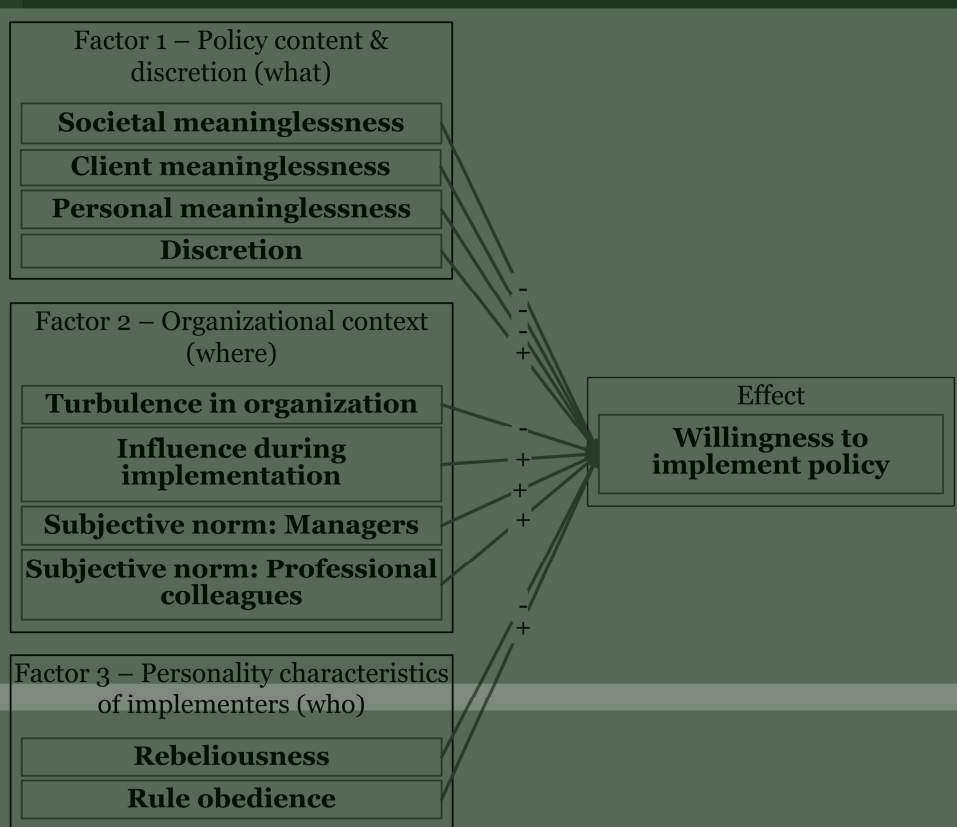
Figure 7.1 Theoretical framework for explaining willingness to implement new policies

7.3 Method

7.3.1 Case

To test the proposed model, we undertook a survey of Dutch mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy.

First, we provide a short overview of this policy. In January 2008, the Dutch government introduced Diagnoses Related Groups in mental healthcare. This was part of a process to convert the Dutch healthcare system into one based on a regulated market. The system of Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs)

was developed as a means of determining the level of financial reward for mental healthcare provision. The DRG policy differs significantly from the former method in which each medical action resulted in a payment, i.e. the more sessions that a mental healthcare specialist had with a patient, the more recompense that could be claimed. The DRG policy changed the situation by stipulating a standard rate for each disorder. As such, DRGs (related to the Law Health Market Organization, 'Wet Marktordening Gezondheidszorg") can be seen as the introduction of regulated competition into Dutch healthcare, a move in line with New Public Management ideas.

We chose the DRG policy as the basis for testing our model. Firstly, public professionals, here psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists, will be the ones implementing the policy. This is essential as the model is designed to further the debate on the experiences of public professionals with policies. Secondly, the DRG policy goals focus strongly on economic goals, such as efficiency and client choice, and earlier research indicates that it is policies that pursue these kinds of NPM goals that create problems for public professionals. Third, in the context of the DRG policy, professionals had considerable control over their own actions. This means that willingness, or a lack thereof, to implement could actually influence the behavior of these professionals when it came to implementing the policy, and this makes studying the willingness of these professionals valuable. Clearly, not all the professionals were in favor of the policy, demonstrations took place and some professionals pressured their associations to defy the DRG policy. Also more subtle forms of subversion were employed, such as reclassifying a patient into a higher diagnosis group (so-called 'up-coding'). If this occurs frequently, the efficiency goal of the DRG policy will be undermined. These examples are all manifestations of unwillingness.

7.3.2   Sampling and response

Our sampling frame consisted of 5,199 professionals who were members of two nationwide mental healthcare associations. These were all the members of these associations who could, in principle, be working with the DRG policy. Using an email and two reminders, we received 1,317 returns of our questionnaire; a response of 25%.

The gender composition of the respondent group was 66% female, which is consistent with the Dutch average (69%) for mental healthcare professionals (Palm et al., 2008). The respondents' average age was slightly higher than that of the mental healthcare professional population (48 against 44). In total, 235 organizations were represented in the respondent group. No organization dominated, with the largest number of respondents from one

organization being 43. To rule-out a possible non-response bias, we conducted non-response research where we contacted the non-responders for their reasons for not participating. Common reasons for not participating were a lack of time, retirement, change of occupation or not working with the DRG policy (some organizations, including some hospitals, were not yet working with this policy).

The large number of respondents, their characteristics in terms of gender and age and the results of the non-response research indicate that our respondents are quite a good representation of the population. Nevertheless, we cannot completely rule out a non-response bias since the non-respondents may differ from the respondents in terms of numerous other (unexamined) characteristics.

7.3.3 Measures

Here, we report the measurement of variables. All measures had adequate Cronbach alphas (ranging from .71 to .95), as shown in the later results section. Unless stated otherwise, the measures were formatted using five-point Likert scales. For some items, we used templates. Templates allow the researcher to specify an item by replacing general phrases with more specific ones that better fit the research context. For example, instead of stating 'the policy' or 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items using the specific policy and group of professionals which are being examined, here 'the DRG policy' and 'healthcare professionals' replaced the template terms. This makes it easier for professionals to understand items, as they are better tailored to their context and this, in turn, increases reliability and content validity (DeVellis, 2003:62). The items of all measures are shown in Appendix 2.

Factor 1 – Policy content and discretion
Societal meaninglessness
Tummers (2009) conceptualized and measured societal meaninglessness as one of the dimensions of 'policy alienation'. Policy alienation has been defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients.

Societal meaninglessness reflects the perception of professionals concerning the benefit of a policy to socially relevant goals. Based on expert interviews and document analysis, we concluded that the introduction of DRGs had three main goals: (1) increasing transparency in costs and quality of mental healthcare, (2) increasing efficiency and (3) increasing patient choice.

Client meaninglessness

Client meaninglessness – also conceptualized as a dimension of policy alienation (Tummers, 2009) – refers to the perception of professionals about the benefits of them implementing the DRG policy for their own clients. For instance, do they perceive that they are really helping their patients by implementing this policy?

Personal meaninglessness

Personal meaninglessness looks at a professional's perceptions of the added value of them implementing a policy for themselves. Holt et al. (2007) developed and validated a scale for this concept, for which they coined the term 'personal valence'.

Discretion

Discretion concerns the perceived freedom of the implementer in terms of the type, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards delivered (Lipsky, 1980). Discretion – or operational powerlessness - was measured using a six-item scale (Tummers, 2009).

Factor 2 – Organizational context
Subjective norm

The subjective norm was measured using a validated scale developed by Metselaar (1997). It was designed to examine the perceptions of professionals towards the attitudes of five groups towards a policy: the board of directors, managers, colleagues, subordinates and others in the organizational unit. Based on theoretical arguments and factor analyses, we distinguished between the subjective norm of managers (including the board of directors), and the subjective norm of professionals (including subordinates and others in the organizational unit).

Influence during implementation

The influence of professionals during the implementation of the policy by the organization was measured using the concept of tactical powerlessness (which is the reverse of influence in the organization) (Tummers, 2009).

Factor 3 – Personality characteristics
Rebelliousness

Rebelliousness was measured using a validated scale (Shen & Dillard, 2005). Shen and Dillard note that using this scale is 'theoretically and empirically justifiable' (p. 80).

Rule compliance

Rule compliance is an persons' belief as to whether he or she feels obliged to obey governmental rules. To measure rule compliance, we used a scale from the European Social Survey.

Effect and control variables

Change willingness (willingness to implement)

We measured change willingness using a validated scale of Metselaar (1997). This scale also uses templates, which allow the researcher to specify an item by replacing general phrases with more specific ones that better fit the research context. Here, we replaced 'the change' with the 'DRG policy'.

Control variables

We included some commonly used control variables: gender, age and management position (yes/no). Further, we included a variable showing whether a professional works independently (to some extent) or only for an institution. This was taken into account since professionals working independently may have different interactions with DRGs.

7.4 RESULTS

7.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 7.1 and Table 7.2.

Table 7.1 Descriptive statistics for the variables in the study

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach alpha
Control variables			NA
1. Sex (male = ref. cat.)	0.64	NA	
2. Age	47.94	11.01	
3. Working (partly) independently (only in institution = ref. cat.)	0.33	NA	
4. Managing position (non-management position = ref. cat.)	0.44	NA	
Policy Content and Discretion			
5. Societal meaninglessness	7.70	1.67	.96
6. Client meaninglessness	7.73	1.53	.80
7. Personal meaninglessness	6.90	1.46	.79
8. Discretion	4.62	1.81	.83
Organizational context			
9. Influence during implementation	4.47	1.90	.87
10. Subjective norm: Managers	6.16	1.67	.71
11. Subjective norm: Professionals	3.96	1.54	.86
Personality characteristics			
12. Rebelliousness	4.80	0.92	.78
13. Rule compliance	5.53	1.39	.80
Proposed effect			
14. Change willingness	4.32	1.77	.85

Note: the means for variables 5 to 14 are rescaled onto a ten-point range (1-10) to aid interpretation.

Table 7.2 Correlations for the variables in the study

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Sex	1													
2. Age	-.34**	1												
3. Working (partly) independently	-.16**	.32**	1											
4. Management position	-.26**	.19**	-.05	1										
5. Societal meaninglessness	-.17**	.18**	.10**	.10**	1									
6. Client meaninglessness	-.12**	.17**	.07	-.06*	.69**	1								
7. Personal meaninglessness	-.01	-.02	-.16**	.08**	.46**	.61**	1							
8. Discretion	.07*	-.01	.14**	-.12**	-.39**	-.43**	-.56**	1						
9. Influence during implementation	.00	-.09**	.02	.03	-.28**	-.33**	-.34	.42**	1					
10. Subjective norm: Managers	.00	-.04	-.04	.00	-.27**	-.24**	-.15**	.08*	.04	1				
11. Subjective norm: Professionals	.05	-.04	.03	.02	-.48**	-.50**	-.45**	.42**	.39**	.38**	1			
12. Rebelliousness	-.07*	.08**	.09**	.08**	.02	.02	.10**	-.03	-.07*	.09**	.05	1		
13. Rule compliance	.10**	-.01	-.03	-.04	-.12**	-.12**	-.08*	.06	.09**	-.03	.03	-.14**	1	
14. Change willingness	-.16**	-.15**	-.06	-.01	-.57**	-.56**	-.50**	.41**	.36**	-.23**	.48**	-.10**	.18**	1

Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01

Data based on a single application of a self-reported questionnaire can result in inflated relationships between variables due to common method variance. We conducted a Harman one-factor test to evaluate the extent to which common method variance was a concern. The factors together accounted for 71% of the total variance. The most significant factor did not account for a majority of the variance (only 32%). The fact that a single factor did not emerge, and the first factor did not account for a majority of the variance, suggests that common method variance is not a major concern here.

7.4.2 Regression results

Regression analyses were conducted to examine which factors predicted change willingness, see Table 7.3.

In the first model, we regressed change willingness on the control variables (R^2.of 03). In the subsequent models, we added the policy content variables (model 2, increased R^2 to .43), the organizational context variables (model 3, increased R^2 to .45) and the personality characteristics variables (model 4, R^2 increased to .47). These increases were all statistically significant. Thus, the combination of the various types of variables contributes considerably to an explanation of the change willingness of public professionals. We will now consider the individual hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that societal meaninglessness will be negatively related to the professionals' willingness to implement DRGs. As Table 7.3 shows, in the final step of the analysis, societal meaninglessness is significantly related to change willingness (β=-.25 p<.01). The high beta coefficient indicates that societal meaninglessness is especially influential.

The second hypothesis looks at the influence of client meaningless on change willingness. This influence is significant (β=-.12 p<.01) So, when professionals do not see a policy as having value for their own clients, they are less willing to implement it.

The third hypothesis examines the relationship between personal meaninglessness and change willingness. Our empirical analysis confirmed this hypothesis in that there is a significant influence of personal meaninglessness on change willingness (β=-.17 p<.01).

Hypothesis 4 examines the positive influence of discretion on the willingness of professionals to put effort into a policy. Our results show that this is indeed the case: greater perceived discretion heightens change willingness (β=.07 p<.05).

The fifth hypothesis looks at the influence of professionals during the implementation of the policy by their organization. Here, our data do indeed

show a positive relationship between influence during organizational implementation and change willingness (β=.10 p<0.1).

Hypotheses 6 and 7 examine the subjective norm. Our analysis shows that the subjective norm of managers has a statically significant but low influence (β=.06 p<.05). That is, when managers are perceived as being positive about a change, this somewhat boosts the inclination of professionals to implement the policy. However, the influence of the subjective norm of one's professional colleagues is much stronger (β=.13 p<.01). The more positive that professional colleagues are about the DRG policy, the more effort a professional will put into its implementation.

The eighth hypothesis concerns the relationship between rebelliousness and change willingness. As could be expected from the applied psychology literature, the results indicate that rebellious individuals are indeed less willing to implement the policy (β=-.06 p<.05), even after a large number of other factors have been controlled for.

Finally, Hypothesis 9 examines the influence of rule compliance on change willingness. The expectation is that public professionals who score highly on rule compliance will feel that public rules and regulations should be adhered to. Based on this, we expected such public professionals to be more willing than others to implement a new governmental policy, irrespective of its content. Our empirical analysis supports this expectation (β=.10 p<.01).

Table 7.3 Hierarchical regression analyses for variables predicting change willingness

	Model 1 Including control variables	Model 2 Including content variables	Model 3 Including context variables	Model 4 Including personality characteristics
Control variables				
Female	.13**	.07**	.08**	.07*
Male	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Age	-.11**	-.05	-.04	-.05
Working independently (to some extent)	.00	-.03	-.04	-.03
Working in institution	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Managing position	.04	.09**	.07*	.07*
Non-management position	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.	Ref. cat.
Policy content and discretion				
Societal meaninglessness		-.30**	-.26**	-.25**
Client meaninglessness		-.16**	-.12**	-.12**
Personal meaninglessness		-.20**	-.18**	-.17**
Discretion		.12**	.06	.07*
Organization context				
Influence during implementation			.11**	.10**
Subjective norm (managers)			.05	.06*
Subjective norm (professionals)			.12**	.13**
Personality characteristics				
Rebelliousness				-.06*
Rule compliance				.10**
ΔR^2	.03	.40**	.03**	.01**
Overall adjusted R^2		.43	.45	.47

Note: Beta-coefficients are presented. * $p <.05$, ** $p < .01$.
Regression Criteria were met (Independent residuals, no multicollinearity, no exclusion of influential outlying, Cook's distance max. 0.02 (criterion < 1), homoscedasticity and normality criteria met).

Based on the results of our hypothesis testing, we can construct Figure 7.2. In this Figure, we see that the policy content factor, especially meaninglessness with their relatively high betas (-25,-.12 and -.17). Further, the organizational context and personality characteristics were also influential, albeit to a lower degree. In the concluding section, we will elaborate on these findings.
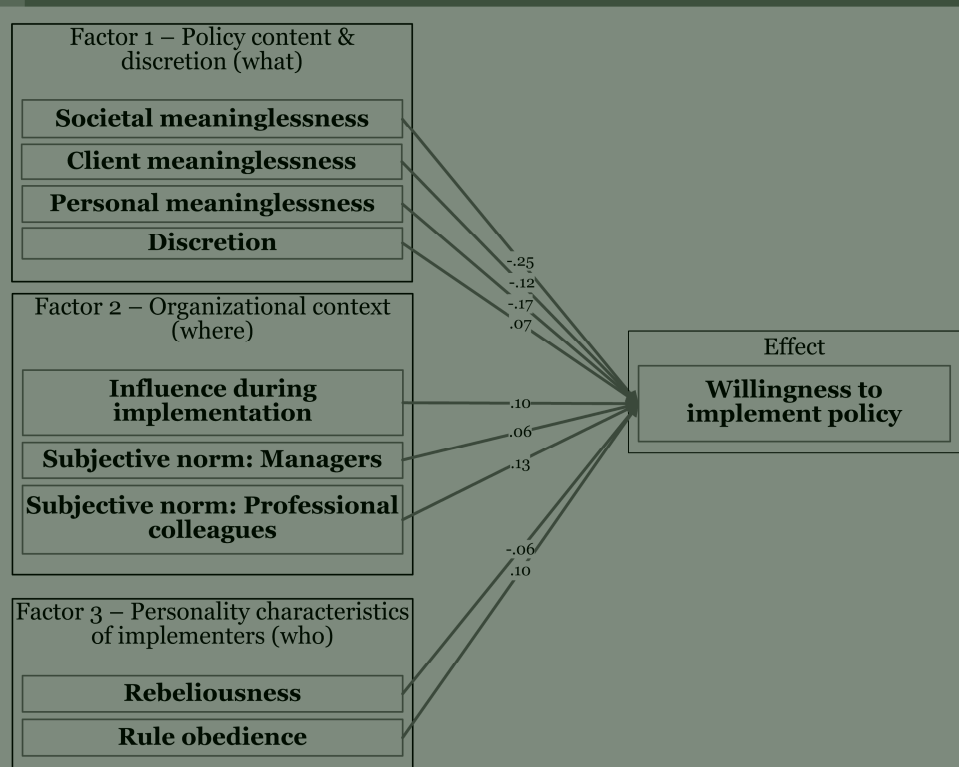

Figure 7.2 Final model, only paths that were significant at the .05 level or higher are included

7.4.3 DRG policy: policy content and discretion

To increase the understanding of the case studied, we will now discuss some qualitative data regarding the DRG policy. This provides an additional perspective on the interplay between discretion, policy content and organizational context.

First, we note that the DRG policy can impose change with respect to discretion. Professionals have to work in a more 'evidence-based' way, and are required to account for their cost declarations in terms of the mental health DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual) classification system. As a result, it becomes harder to use practices that are difficult to standardize and evaluate, such as psychodynamic treatments. Some professionals perceive this as a reduction in their discretion. As Van Sambeek, Tonkens and Bröer (2011:50) argue: "Although the DSM and evidence-based guidelines are developed mostly

by professionals, they can generate resistance when becoming mandatory [...]. When their use has become obligatory, professionals feel limited in their clinical autonomy".

Discretion regarding the length of treatment is arguably also increasingly limited. Whereas, in the former system, each medical action resulted in a payment, under the DRG policy a standard rate is determined for each disorder. This means that it has become more difficult to adjust the treatment to the specific needs of a patient. As one professional argued (unless stated otherwise, quotations are drawn from open answers from the survey):

> *"Patients receive a 'label' from a classification system [...] Sometimes a patient fits into a 'depression' but really needs something more than a neat 'Cognitive Behavioral Therapy protocol of ten sessions'. If time and number of sessions rather than content start leading, it becomes impossible to provide patient-centred care."*

As a result, many professionals felt a loss of discretion (also evidenced by the relatively low average score of 4.6). Two illustrative quotes from professionals are "the profession is reduced to mere procedures" and "the DRG policy is a straightjacket". This means that the possibility of there being high discretion (positively affecting change willingness, but eventually negatively influencing policy performance) did not occur in the case studied. Contrary to this, there was relatively low discretion, which negatively influenced willingness to change, but could nevertheless be fruitful for policy performance, as implementers had less possibility to shirk or sabotage the policy.

When examining the meaningfulness of the policy, we see that the mean score is quite high (7.7): many professionals do not have the feeling that societal goals are being achieved (i.e. a high societal meaninglessness). This is mainly due to the characteristics of the DRG policy. For instance, when considering the efficiency goal, we see that the DRG policy can have financially perverse incentives. An example can clarify this. The DRG time allocation for treating a personality disorder is between 800 minutes and 1800 minutes. An implication of this is that the treatment yields the same amount of money for the professional regardless of the time spent on the treatment. This provides an incentive to complete the treatment at 800 minutes. Furthermore, it provides an incentive to classify a patient in a higher diagnosis group (the so-called 'up-coding'). As a result, the efficiency goal is unlikely to be reached through the DRG policy.

We also conclude that many professionals felt that the DRG policy is not very meaningful for their own patients (average score 7.7 on client meaninglessness). For instance, one requirement of the DRG policy is that professionals have to provide patient information to a national DRG Information System. This patient information, such as details of the disorder, used to be fully protected under the duty of professional confidentiality but, now, many professionals feel that the patients' privacy is insufficiently protected. Many thought this was not beneficial for their patients.

When studying personal meaninglessness (average score 6.6), we first found that, following the introduction of the DRG policy, the revenues of professionals (especially freelancers) often declined, but that later many professionals experienced positive financial consequences. Quotes that illustrate this are: "After a miserable time of major financial problems, it is going well at the moment" and "I think I earn more money because of the DRG policy, that's nice". Second, and related to client meaninglessness, many professionals felt that their professional confidentiality was being impinged upon. As one professional put it: "I consider the delivery of a diagnosis to health insurers contrary to my professional confidentiality". Third, many professionals felt that the DRG policy resulted in an increased administrative workload, something which was not welcomed. In our survey, 90% (fully) agreed with the statement "As a result of the policy, I have to do more administrative work". To summarize, in terms of personal meaninglessness, the DRG policy affected in particular the professionals' income, professional confidentiality and administrative workload.

This section has highlighted the policy content and organizational context behind the statistical data, as such providing some background to interpret the results of this study (for more information, see Palm et al., 2008; Van Sambeek et al., 2011).

7.5 Conclusions

Our main goal was to examine factors that might influence the willingness, or reluctance, of public professionals to implement new policies. Based on literature from public administration, change management and applied psychology fields, a theoretical model was constructed. This model was tested in a survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. It works adequately in that the factors included in the model explain 47% of the variance in change willingness. The high internal consistency values (Cronbach alphas ranging from .71 to .96) and the meeting of regression criteria strengthens the reliability and validity of the study. As such,

we can conclude that our quantitative, interdisciplinary approach adds to the literature concerning the attitudes of professionals towards public policies.

The results show that policy content is the most important factor in explaining this willingness. However, the organizational context and the personality characteristics of the implementers are also influential and should be taken into account if one is to properly study the attitudes of professionals towards public policies. Alongside these general conclusions, we can draw three more-specific conclusions.

Firstly, the three meaninglessness factors (societal, client and personal) have the strongest influences on willingness to change. When professionals do not see benefits for themselves they were less willing to implement it. Although this is influential, even after controlling for this factor, societal meaninglessness remained the most influential. When professionals feel that a policy does not contribute to societal goals, such as transparency or increasing patient choice, they are far less willing to implement it. These findings show how important the perceived benefit of a policy is to professionals. Despite this, the current debate on policy implementation is primarily focused on the influence and discretion of the implementers. Our study shows that while influence and discretion are important, taking account of the perceived meaninglessness (or its counterpart meaningfulness) of a policy is vital, and should be included in further research.

Secondly, we can see that the subjective norm of especially professional colleagues in an organization is an important factor in explaining the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies. This is a relevant observation given the current debate on pressured public professionals (Freidson, 2001). It has been stated that public professionals nowadays feel pressure from many sides due to the emancipation of their clients, the demands of politicians and the (ir)rationalities of their managers. Although we will not deny that many professionals do indeed feel such pressure, the created discourse, of feeling pressured, also seems to influence professionals who would not otherwise sense such pressure.

Thirdly, this study is one of the first policy implementation studies that explicitly considers the personality characteristics of the implementers. Our research shows that these are important. For instance, the more rebellious professionals were less willing to implement the DRG policy, irrespective of the content and the organizational context. Elaborating on Judge et al. (1999), we note that there is a real possibility that successfully coping with a new policy is determined by the psychological predispositions of professionals.

As with all studies, this study has limitations. First, we examined factors influencing the willingness to implement public policies. However, willingness or alternatively resistance to implementation may not always predict behavior

(Ajzen, 1991). In the theoretical framework we noted the important role of discretion during implementation in the policy behavior of professionals. High discretion can enhance policy performance as it can increase the willingness to implement, with implementers being given the opportunity to adapt the policy to the situations of their clients. However, if professionals do not agree with the policy, they can use this high discretion to shirk or sabotage. In the present study, we analysed only the influence of discretion on the willingness to implement policies. Future studies could go deeper into the relationship between discretion, willingness to implement policies *and* policy performance. For instance, one could explore the conditions under which a high level of discretion positively influences both willingness to implement new policies and policy performance, and under what conditions a high level of discretion stimulates willingness to implement new policies, but negatively influences performance.

Second, the results of this study, and the implications outlined, should be interpreted in light of the study's context, sample and response rate. Although the study's generalizability is improved by the fact that the sample included a large number of public professionals, working in different occupations, positions and places, one should be cautious in generalising this to other public-sector policies or domains. Another area for further research would therefore be to test the proposed model using other types of policies in a range of public domains.

A third limitation was that we did not include all the possible factors that might influence willingness to implement. In future research, scholars could, for instance, examine the influence of other organizational factors such as the level of trust between professionals and management, or the level of organizational identification. Further, other personality characteristics could be taken into account, such as optimism.

Concluding, we see that the three factors – related to policy content, organizational context and personality characteristics - are all important in explaining the willingness of professionals to implement public policies. This indicates the complexity and multidimensional character of policy implementation. It suggests that, to increase the understanding of public policy implementation, researchers and practitioners should move beyond taking single factors into consideration, and try to include multiple factors for explaining the willingness or otherwise resistance of public professionals to implement policies. This would add to the understanding of the attitudes of professionals towards governmental policies, which could ultimately lead to policy implementation being more effective.

8

THE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS, ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON JOB SATISFACTION OF PUBLIC PROFESSIONALS

Abstract

Currently, there is an intense debate concerning professionals. Professionals seem to be experiencing increasing pressures from - among other things – new governmental policies and political games between managers and professionals. This article aims to contribute to our understanding of these pressures. First, it theoretically analyses the influence of the policy implementation process and politicking pressures on job satisfaction, drawing on the policy implementation and the organizational politics literatures. Second, it analyses these pressures quantitatively, using a survey of 1,317 Dutch healthcare professionals. The results show that both politicking pressures and two policy implementation processes (the perceived lack of influence and of autonomy during policy implementation) affect the job satisfaction of public professionals. Further, they interact: the negative effect of powerlessness on job satisfaction is strongest among professionals working in politicized environments. That is, having an influence during policy implementation is especially relevant when professionals are experiencing politicized environments.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is an intense debate regarding professionals (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Emery & Giauque, 2003; Hebson et al., 2003). Freidson (2001), once a leading critic of the power of professions, was arguing a decade ago that the power of professions was diminishing to such a level that this could have serious negative consequences for both the professionals and for society. Numerous forces nowadays counteract professionalism, such as changes in the way professionals are managed, the emancipation of clients, and changes in prevailing political viewpoints (Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Exworthy & Halford, 1998). For instance, some note that, as a result of managerial pressures, professionals experience a reduction in their autonomy and dominance (Evetts, 2003:369; Exworthy & Halford, 1998).

We aim to analyze two important pressures that professionals experience: policy and politicking pressures, and their effects on job satisfaction. Firstly, several authors such as Duyvendak (2006) and Freidson (2001) note that many of the pressures that professionals face are related to the difficulties they have with the policies they have to implement. Nowadays, policies often focus on efficiency and financial transparency, which can conflict with professional values (Bottery, 1998; White, 1996). Further, pressures stemming from political game-playing in organizations are very relevant (Mayes & Allen, 1977; Mintzberg, 1983a; Morgan, 2006; Pfeffer, 1981). That is, alongside the introduction of new policies, these professionals also have to deal with other pressures, such as those coming from the internal political games carried out within their organizations. Managers in public service organizations are being forced to introduce 'planning and control-systems', benchmarking, and monitoring systems (Noordegraaf, 2006:182). This can contradict the professional basis of service provision and increase the pressure to conform to organizational political behavior, which may negatively influence the attitudes and behaviors of professionals.

The first contribution of this article is that it combines insights from the policy implementation literature and the organizational politics literature. While policy implementation scholars examine how frontline professionals experience the implementation of governmental policies (Elmore, 1985; May & Winter, 2009; Riccucci, 2005), organization scholars look at the way organizational politics influences a number of work outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Buchanan, 2008; Ferris et al., 1996; Ferris et al., 2002). These two literature streams are not well connected, even though policy implementation happens in and around organizations (Engbersen, 2009:149) that can be characterized as political systems (Mayes & Allen, 1977; Mintzberg, 1983a;

Morgan, 2006; Pfeffer, 1981). During policy implementation, the organizational political environment within an organization can be highly relevant, such as when you need the support of certain informal leaders. As such, combining these literature streams, by examining the interconnectedness between policy and politicking pressures, could increase our understanding of the pressures facing professionals, and their effects on job satisfaction.

The second contribution is that we analyze the pressures and their influence on job satisfaction using a quantitative approach. The majority of studies examining the pressures on professionals in service delivery rely on qualitative research (for example Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Thomas & Davies, 2005; Tummers et al., 2009). The strength of this qualitative research is that it captures the plethora of reasons for the increasingly problematic employment of public professionals such as the quality of line management and the intensified workload. Quantitatively analyzing important research questions can yield new insights, adding to the debate by using large samples and statistical tests.

This brings us to the outline of the article. In the following section, we discuss the theoretical framework, considering the influence of policy and politicking pressures on the job satisfaction of professionals. Second, we use a large-scale survey of 1,317 Dutch healthcare professionals to test the proposed explanatory framework. We conclude by discussing the contribution of this article to research on policy implementation and organizational politics, and more generally to the debate on professionals in service delivery.

8.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

8.2.1 Background: professionals and pressures

In the early studies on professionals and professionalism, a functionalist perspective was used, originating from the works of Emile Durkheim (1957) (see also Van der Veen, forthcoming 2012). In this perspective, professionals are seen as the bearers of important social values. Professionals, such as medical specialists and notaries, are said to use their skills for the betterment of society. Particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, professionals and professionalism became much more controversial topics. It was said that professionals were over-occupied with their self-interests, resulting in, for instance, empire-building and protectionism of their professional status (Duyvendak et al., 2006). A prime example of this assault is Illich's 'Medical Nemesis. The Expropriation of Health'. In this, Illich (1976:3) argues that the power of the medical profession is harmful to society: 'The medical establishment has become a major threat to health. The disabling impact of professional control over medicine has reached the proportions of an epidemic.'

However, today, the balance seems to be shifting still further (Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Freidson, 2001). For instance, some note that, as a result of managerial pressures, professionals are experiencing a reduction in their autonomy and dominance (Evetts, 2003:369; Exworthy & Halford, 1998). Further, Conley (2002:728), in examining the influence of New Public Management (NPM) in the UK, argues that 'one result of continued pressure is that public services workers are 'voting with their feet' [i.e., leaving public organizations]'. Further, as a result of managerial pressures and emancipated clients, professions such as medicine are facing deprofessionalization (Harrison & Ahmad, 2000). However, these developments are increasing the professionalization of other groups, such as social workers and nurses, where clients and politicians are urging evidence-based practice and a highly educated workforce (Noordegraaf, 2007). Nevertheless, based on a qualitative case study, Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2004) argue that introducing managerial pressures such as NPM can negatively influence both the autonomy and job satisfaction of nurses.

This discussion shows the different ways in which professionals and professionalism have been considered over time, and the range of pressures professionals nowadays face. In this article, we will look specifically at the ways in which policy and politicking pressures influence the job satisfaction of professionals. Policy pressures are increasingly important in the public sphere, most notably as a result of the introduction of NPM-like policies focusing on business values such as efficiency and financial transparency (De Ruyter et al., 2008; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Thomas & Davies, 2005). Further, politicking pressures are perceived as a major factor in the public sector, with its ambiguous goals, scarce resources, and groups of employees having different, often conflicting, values, norms, and interests (Miles, 1980; Pfeffer, 1981; Rainey, 2003). We focus on the effect of these pressures on job satisfaction as this is an important work outcome and a strong predictor of work behaviors, such as organizational citizenship (Organ & Greene, 1981), and turnover (Saari & Judge, 2004).

8.2.2 Policy pressures: policy powerlessness on strategic, tactical and operational levels

The policy pressures that professionals face are examined using the policy powerlessness concept. In the realm of policymaking and policy implementation, powerlessness relates to the degree (or rather the lack of) of influence public professionals have in shaping the policy program they have to implement. Policy powerlessness is a dimension of policy alienation, which is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented, here especially by public professionals who

regularly interact directly with clients (Tummers et al., 2009). We use this concept here for two reasons. First, the degree of power (or influence) during policy implementation is an important topic in the debate on the pressures facing professionals in service delivery (Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001). Second, it is one of the few concepts in the policy implementation literature which have been quantified using psychometrically sound approaches (Tummers, forthcoming 2012). As such, it is well matched to the quantitative approach we intend.

Tummers et al. (2009) distinguished between three levels of policy powerlessness: strategic, tactical, and operational. Strategic powerlessness refers to the lack of influence perceived by professionals on decisions concerning the content of a policy, as captured in rules and regulations. This form of powerlessness can occur, for example, when a new policy is drafted without the help of the professionals, by not consulting their professional associations or labor unions.

Tactical powerlessness refers to professionals' perceived lack of influence over decisions concerning the way a policy is to be executed within their own organization. Professionals can feel involved, for example, if they take part in working groups or meetings on the execution of the policy program. As such, participation during organizational implementation can help to decrease tactical powerlessness (Judson, 1991). Conversely, management may choose not to involve professionals. The more professionals feel they have some influence over decisions concerning the way a policy is executed in their organization, the less they experience tactical powerlessness.

Operational powerlessness relates to the influence of professionals during actual policy implementation. Whereas tactical powerlessness looks at the influence of the professional on the way that an organization executes a policy, operational powerlessness examines the influence professionals perceive themselves to have when actually implementing the policy. For instance, do they have to adhere to rigid procedures during implementation? In the public administration literature, this is described in terms of a civil servant's discretion (Lipsky, 1980). Operational powerlessness may be particularly pronounced with professionals whose expectations of discretion and autonomy contradict prevailing notions of bureaucratic control (Freidson, 2001).

8.2.3 The influence of policy powerlessness on job satisfaction

The mechanism linking power to job satisfaction can be traced back to the human relations movement (McGregor, 1960). One of the central tenets of this movement is that employees have a right to make input into decisions that affect their lives. Employees enjoy carrying out decisions they have helped

create. Also, employees can achieve recognition when they are granted the opportunity to make decisions themselves. Such recognition is known to motivate and satisfy employees. As such, the human relations movement argues that when employees experience influence during implementation (here: policy implementation), this will increase their job satisfaction by fulfilling intrinsic employee needs (Wagner III, 1994).

We can apply these findings in relating the dimensions of powerlessness to job satisfaction (see also S. M. Bacharach & Aiken, 1979). Looking at strategic powerlessness, we would expect that the more public professionals – as a professional group – experience influence in the drafting of a policy, the more they will be satisfied with their job. Here, the individual public professionals do not have to experience this influence directly; they can sense an influence if others, such as their professional associations, appear to have fruitfully represented them in the debate. (Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall, & Jennings, 1988).

Next, we can consider the relationship between tactical powerlessness and job satisfaction. It is commonly accepted that participation in decision-making can increase employee job satisfaction by providing employees with a sense of control and co-ownership. After conducting a meta-analysis of the literature, Miller and Monge (1986:748) concluded that "participation has an effect on both satisfaction and productivity, and its effect on satisfaction is somewhat stronger than its effect on productivity" (see also Wagner III, 1994). Based on this, we would expect that the more professionals sense that they can influence the way policy is implemented within their organization (a low tactical powerlessness), the more they will be satisfied with their job.

Finally, greater operational powerlessness – or less discretion - is expected to be negatively related to job satisfaction (Spector, 1986). In the policy implementation literature, it is suggested that an important factor in determining the attitudes of implementers is the extent to which organizations delegate decision-making authority to the frontline (Meier & O'Toole, 2002). This influence may be particularly pronounced for professionals whose expectations of discretion and autonomy contradict notions of bureaucratic control (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Evetts, 2003; Freidson, 2001).

Thus, we propose:

H1: Strategic powerlessness negatively influences job satisfaction.
H2: Tactical powerlessness negatively influences job satisfaction.
H3: Operational powerlessness negatively influences job satisfaction.

8.2.4 The influence of organizational politics on job satisfaction

Alongside policy pressures, we also examine pressures coming from organizational politics, or politicking (Mintzberg, 1983a; Morgan, 2006; Pfeffer, 1981). Bacharach and Lawler (1980:1,4) contend that people in organizations are constantly bargaining, forming coalitions, and using influence tactics. Politicking is considered normal practice in organizations, a daily event. However, it is also viewed in a pejorative way, as can be seen in the definition of politics by Mintzberg (1983a:172): 'politics refers to individual or group behaviour that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all, in the technical sense, illegitimate'. Organizational members indeed often perceive politics negatively. For instance, Gandz and Murray (1980:244), using a survey of 428 respondents, conclude that "In terms of general affect, respondents felt that politics are generally bad, unfair, unnecessary, unhealthy and conflictual".

Politicking has been primarily studied in two ways (Witt, Andrews, & Kacmar, 2000). On the one hand, it has been viewed as objective behavior. Here, political tactics – such as self-promotion, sweet-talking or bargaining - are central. Alternatively, politicking has been viewed subjectively, when the perceptions of politics are examined (Ferris et al., 1996; Vigoda, 2000). In this study, we adopt the second view: examining politicking using employee perceptions (see also Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris et al., 1996; Witt et al., 2000). This is based on the notion of Lewin (1936): that people behave on the basis of their perceptions of reality, not on the basis of reality itself (See also the Thomas theorem, Merton, 1995). Perceived politicking should therefore show strong relationships with work outcomes such as job satisfaction.

Numerous studies have indicated that perceived workplace politics have negative impacts on job satisfaction (for example Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Ferris et al., 2002; Gandz & Murray, 1980), although these have not focused specifically on professionals (our focus). It seems logical that employees experience job dissatisfaction when they think that promotions, pay, or projects are awarded based on political considerations rather than on merit (Witt et al., 2000:343). Further, a high level of perceived politicking can lead to an unwillingness to share knowledge. Furthermore, it can cause considerable delays in decision-making as people first check actions with superiors and other influential people. This can also decrease job satisfaction (R. W. Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979). Therefore, we would expect that professionals experiencing increasing politicking in their organization, will see their job satisfaction decrease.

H4: A greater extent of perceived politicking negatively influences job satisfaction

8.2.5 Politicking and policy powerlessness

In an article published in 2000, Witt et al. (see also Ferris et al., 1996; Witt, 1995) argue that if employees are engaged in discussions about important issues in their work, and develop a consensus to resolve these issues, they are less affected by organizational politics. More specifically, they state that the more employees participate in decision-making, the less organizational politicking will influence job satisfaction. On this basis, one can argue that it is especially important to engage people in decisions in organizations where there is a high level of politicking (Witt, 1995; Witt et al., 2000). Participation in decision-making reduces uncertainty because employees know what to expect from decisions. Further, this participation creates co-ownership and recognition for the employees. This can generate feelings of security and protection, which are especially valuable in a political environment.

Tactical powerlessness can be considered as relating to a specific form of participation; that is it is the inverse of participation in decision-making regarding a specific policy (Tummers, 2011a). We would expect that the negative influence of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction to be especially strong in highly politicized organizations. In such organizations, professionals face greater insecurity, stress, and anxiety (Pfeffer, 1981). When a new policy is to be implemented in an organization with a high level of politicking, engaging the professionals is highly relevant as this enhances their feelings of security and control. As a consequence, their levels of stress and insecurity will decline, positively influencing job satisfaction. However, in organizations where there is only low-level politicking, it seems less necessary to engage professionals in decision-making as their feelings of security, control, and protection are not under imminent threat.

Expressed in more-technical terms, we expect an interaction effect to occur, in other words "an effect in which a third independent variable causes the relationship between a dependent/independent variable pair to change, depending on the value of the moderating variable" (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998:145). We expect the degree of politicking in an organization to strengthen the effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction.

H5: The effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction is strongest among professionals working in a highly politicized environment.

8.3   Method

8.3.1   Case subject: Dutch mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy

To test our hypotheses, we undertook a survey of Dutch mental healthcare professionals: namely psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists. These healthcare professionals have had to implement a new financial reimbursement policy known as Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs: DiagnoseBehandelingCombinaties, or DBC's, in Dutch).

First, we provide a short overview of this policy. In January 2008, the Dutch government introduced DRGs in mental healthcare. This was part of a process to convert the Dutch healthcare system into one based on a regulated market (Helderman et al., 2005; Smullen, forthcoming 2012). The system of DRGs was developed as a means of determining the level of financial reward for mental healthcare provision. The DRG policy differs significantly from the former method in which each medical action resulted in a payment, i.e. the more sessions that a mental healthcare specialist had with a patient, the more recompense that could be claimed. This former system was considered as inefficient (Helderman et al., 2005; Kimberly et al., 2009). The DRG policy changed the situation by stipulating a *standard* rate for each disorder, such as a mild depression.

The DRG policy was seen as a good basis for testing our model since public professionals, here psychotherapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, would be the ones implementing the policy. This was a requirement, as one of the goals of this study is to understand the pressures professionals nowadays face. Further, in numerous countries, there have been moves towards similar healthcare payment systems. In the early 1980s, Diagnostic Related Groups (DRGs) were developed in the USA to calculate cost prices for health 'products'. Since then, variants of the DRG system have been developed in Australia, Germany, England, Japan, Sweden, Belgium, and the Netherlands (Kimberly et al., 2009). This increases the potential of generalizing the results of the analysis.

8.3.2   Sampling and response rate

We used a sampling frame of 5,199 professionals, members of two nationwide mental healthcare associations (Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen and Nederlandse Vereniging voor Psychiatrie). These were the members of these associations that could potentially be working with the DRG policy, and therefore could be experiencing pressures related to this policy. In a personalized email, we explained the purpose of our study, invited participation, and indicated that responses would be analyzed anonymously. From the email and two reminders, we received 1,317 questionnaire returns; a response of 25%.

The gender composition of the responding group was consistent with the gender distribution among Dutch mental healthcare professionals (Palm et al., 2008). The respondents' average age was slightly above that of the mental healthcare professional population (48 against 44 years). This is often found when basing samples on professionals associations, which generally have somewhat older members. Given the response rate was only 25%, we conducted non-response research, but this did not indicate any bias. Common reasons for not participating in the survey were lack of time, retirement, change of occupation, or not working with the DRG policy (some organizations, including some hospitals, had yet to work with the DRG policy). Given the large number of respondents, the similarity of the respondents with the potential sample based on demographic variables, and the results of the non-response research, we are satisfied that our respondents were representative of the population.

8.3.3 Measures

This section reports on the measurement of our variables. All the items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All the measures had adequate Cronbach alphas (ranging from .83 to .96) as shown in the results section.

Policy powerlessness

Earlier, we followed the scale development techniques of DeVellis (2003) in order to measure policy powerlessness, a dimension of policy alienation (Tummers, 2011a; forthcoming 2012). In addition to the scale items developed there, we constructed three additional items for the sub-category of strategic powerlessness as this scale was rather limited (with only three items).

Following the recommendations of DeVellis (2003), templates were used in constructing these items. Templates allow the researcher to specify an item by replacing general phrases with more specific ones that better fit the research context. For example, instead of stating 'the policy' and 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items using the specific policy and group of professionals which are being examined. Here 'the DRG policy' and 'healthcare professionals' replaced the template terms. This makes it easier for professionals to understand items as they are tailored to their context and this, in turn, increases reliability and content validity (DeVellis, 2003:62).

Strategic powerlessness was measured using six items that sought to elicit information about the perceived influence the professionals had on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as captured in its rules and regulations. A sample item was 'In my opinion, healthcare professionals had too little power to influence the DRG policy'.

Tactical powerlessness was also assessed using a six-item scale. These items tap into a professional's perceived influence on decisions concerning the way the policy was implemented in their organization. A sample item was 'In my healthcare organization, especially professionals could decide how the DRG policy was implemented (R: reverse item)'.

Operational powerlessness looks at the discretion of a professional while implementing a policy (Lipsky, 1980). Sample items were 'I have freedom to decide how to use the DRG policy (R)' and 'When I work with the DRG policy, I have to adhere to strict procedures'.

Politicking

To measure politicking in an organization, we used the scale developed by Bouckenhooghe et al. (2009). This scale uses four items to capture the extent to which political games are played in an organization. Two of the items in this scale were 'In our organization, favoritism is an important way to achieve something' and 'Within our organization, power games between the departments play an important role'.

Job satisfaction

We used a single item to measure job satisfaction: 'Overall, I am satisfied with my job'. We opted for this single item measure as Nagy (2002:85) states that is it often better to measure job satisfaction with only one item, as "it is more efficient, is more cost-effective, contains more face validity, and is better able to measure changes in job satisfaction".

Control variables

Alongside the variables described above, we included commonly used control variables in our multivariate analysis. These included control variables such as gender (m/f), age (years) and management position (yes/no). We also looked at the influence of occupation. We used a dummy variable indicating if a professional was a psychiatrist or not (so forming a second group made up of psychologists and psychotherapists). This is a good way to reduce multicollinearity in our situation as professionals could have multiple professions. Further, we used a variable indicating whether a professional worked some or all of the time in private practice, or only in a public organization. This was taken into account as professionals may have different experiences if they work in a small practice, both in terms of political behavior and in their interaction with the implemented DRG policy.

8.3.4 Regression analysis

We used regression analysis to examine the influence of the anticipated factors and the control variables on the job satisfaction of public professionals, a commonly used and appropriate method for examining relationships between a set of independent variables and a dependent variable. More specifically, we use moderated multiple regression analyses, a preferred method for examining interaction effects, to examine the moderating influence of tactical powerlessness on the politicking-job satisfaction relationship (L. S. Aiken & West, 1991; Chaplin, 1991; Stone-Romero & Anderson, 1994). Further, we centered all the predictor variables since this is recommended when testing for an interaction effect as it reduces multicollinearity (L. S. Aiken & West, 1991). We tested for a two-way interaction, that is a relationship between a dependent and an independent variable, moderated by a third variable. The interaction term (the product of politicking and tactical powerlessness) is calculated by multiplying the centered values of politicking and tactical powerlessness (L. S. Aiken & West, 1991).

Before carrying out the statistical analyses, we examined the qualitative answers from the respondents (based on open questions included in our survey) to see whether they were familiar with the DRG policy. We deleted 143 returns as the respondents indicated that they were unfamiliar with the new DRG policy, for instance because they just started working with DRGs, had worked abroad, were retired, or worked in another care setting (such as youth care). We considered that this made their assessment of the policy implementation process (concerning the DRG policy) unreliable. That is, these 143 responses were deleted based on substantive argument.

8.4 RESULTS

8.4.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 8.1. As can be seen, all the bivariate correlations for the variables linked in our hypotheses were statistically significant and in the anticipated direction. For example, job satisfaction was negatively related to operational powerlessness and to politicking.

Self-reported data based on a single application of a questionnaire can result in inflated relationships between variables due to common method variance, i.e. variance that is due to the measurement method rather than the constructs themselves (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). As such, we conducted a Harman one-factor test to evaluate the extent to which common method variance was a concern. A factor analysis was conducted on all items used to

measure the variables covered by the hypotheses. We opted for a principle components analysis as this is seen as the preferred method when analyzing more than twenty items. We further opted for oblique rotation because we expected, based on the proposed theoretical framework, the factors to be related. The factors together accounted for 61% of the total variance (using the 'eigenvalue > 1' criterion). Further, the most significant factor did not account for the majority of the variance (only 24%). Given that no single factor emerged and the first factor did not account for a majority of the variance, common method variance does not seem to be a major concern here.

Table 8.1 Descriptive statistics for the variables in the study

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach alpha	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Sex (male= ref. cat.)	.63	NA for dummys	NA	1									
2. Age	48.42	11.01	NA	-.34**	1								
3. Occupation psychiatrist	.43	NA	NA	-.28**	.22**	1							
4. Working only in small practice	.16	NA	NA	-.07**	.27**	n.s.	1						
5. Working partly in small practice	.18	NA	NA	-.13**	.14**	n.s.	-.20**	1					
6. Management Position	.45	NA	NA	-.26**	.19**	.39**	-.13**	n.s.	1				
7. Strategic powerlessness	6.71	1.65	.85	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.12**	n.s.	n.s.	1			
8. Tactical powerlessness	6.54	1.90	.87	n.s.	.09**	n.s.	-.11**	n.s.	n.s.	.37**	1		
9. Operational powerlessness	6.40	1.81	.83	-.07*	n.s.	.13**	-.21**	n.s.	.12**	.32**	.42**	1	
10. Politicking	5.61	2.03	.96	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	-.20**	.10**	n.s.	.10**	.34**	.24**	1
11. Job satisfaction	8.01	1.95	NA	n.s.	n.s.	-.15**	.16**	n.s.	n.s.	-.12**	-.25**	-.33**	-.25**

Note. n.s. = not significant, * p < .05, ** p < .01.
Scores for variables 7 to 11 are rescaled onto a ten-point range (1-10) to aid interpretation.

8.5   Regression results

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the extent to which the policy powerlessness dimensions and politicking were able to predict job satisfaction (Hypotheses 1 to 5). In each subsequent model, the change in R^2 is calculated, and then it is determined whether each change is significantly different from zero.

In the first model, with only control variables in the equation, the R^2 was .06 (F=8.60, p<.01). Adding the three policy powerlessness dimensions in the second model increased R^2 to .15. On inserting other variables in the subsequent models, the R^2 increased further, to .19 in model 4. As such, the combination of the various dimensions of policy powerlessness and of politicking are shown to influence job satisfaction as perceived by public professionals. We can now consider the individual hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that the degree of strategic powerlessness experienced by public professionals will be negatively related to their job satisfaction. As Table 8.2 shows, strategic powerlessness is not significantly related to job satisfaction. That is, this hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that the degree of tactical powerlessness will be negatively related to job satisfaction. The direct effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction is indeed significant (B=-.10 p<.01). Hence, our hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The third hypothesis looks at the influence of operational powerlessness on job satisfaction. As we anticipated from the literature on professions, the results indicate that a greater sense of operational powerlessness (or less autonomy) does indeed strongly decrease the job satisfaction of public professionals (B=-.22 p<.01).

Hypothesis 4 examines the influence of politicking on the degree of job satisfaction. We expected that a higher level of politicking would be associated with low job satisfaction for the professionals. In our study, this was indeed the case (B=-.15 p<.01).

Finally, we examined the interaction between tactical powerlessness and politicking.[1] Such an interaction effect indeed appeared in our empirical analyses (B=-.03 p<.05). The size of the interaction effect is small. This is in line with the arguments of Chaplin (1991), who noted that interaction effects are generally small, and can only be detected using large samples.

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[1] We also analyzed to see if other interaction effects, such as between operational powerlessness and politicking, were present but this was not the case. The only significant interaction effect was between tactical powerlessness and politicking and, for this interaction effect, a strong theoretical basis exists (see Section 8.2).

This interaction effect implies that, when there is a perception of a high degree of organizational politics in an organization, the influence of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction will be greater. Figure 8.1[2] shows the relationship between tactical powerlessness and job satisfaction for two groups: one with a high perceived tactical powerlessness and one with low tactical powerlessness (L. S. Aiken & West, 1991). This indicates (because the slope of the line for the first group is more negative) that high tactical powerlessness has a more negative effect on job satisfaction when levels of perceived politicking are higher. In other words, having influence during policy implementation may be particularly useful when there is a high level of political behaviour within the organization, as was expected based on the arguments leading to Hypothesis 5.

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[2] The figure is based on the work of Jeremy Dawson, statistician at Aston Business School, http://www.jeremydawson.co.uk/slopes.htm, on interpreting two unstandardized variables.

Table 8.2 Hierarchical regression analyses for variables predicting job satisfaction

	Model 1 Control variables	Model 2 Incl. policy powerlessness	Model 3 Including politicking	Model 4 Incl. interaction effect
Constant	8.01	8.02	8.02	8.06
Female (male = ref. cat.)	-.12	-.12	-.10	-.12
Age	.00	.00	.00	.00
Occupation: Psychotherapist (not a psychotherapist = ref. cat)	-.79**	-.70**	-.70**	-.70**
Working only in private practice	.89**	.54**	.41*	.49*
Working partly in private practice (working only in org. = ref. cat.)	.15	.13	.17**	.17**
Managing position (non-management position = ref.cat.)	.27	.28	.25	.27*
Strategic powerlessness		-.03	-.03	-.02
Tactical powerlessness		-.14**	-.09**	-.10**
Operational powerlessness		-.24**	-.23**	-.22**
Politicking			-.16**	-.15**
Tactical powerlessness * Politicking				-.03*
ΔR^2	.06**	.10**	.02**	.004*
Overall R^2	.06**	.16**	.19**	.19**

Note: * p <.05, ** p < .01. All independent variables are centered. B-values are used.
Criteria: Criterion of independent residuals met (Durbin-Watson 1.4, 1<criterion<3). Criterion of no multicollinearity (No VIF-values above 10 and average close to 1. No exclusion of influential outlying cases was required (using casewise diagnostics: 6.9% above standardized residual >|2|, Cook's distance max. 0.07 (criterion < 1). Criteria of homoscedasticity and normality were not met. This is often the case with job satisfaction which is typically skewed.
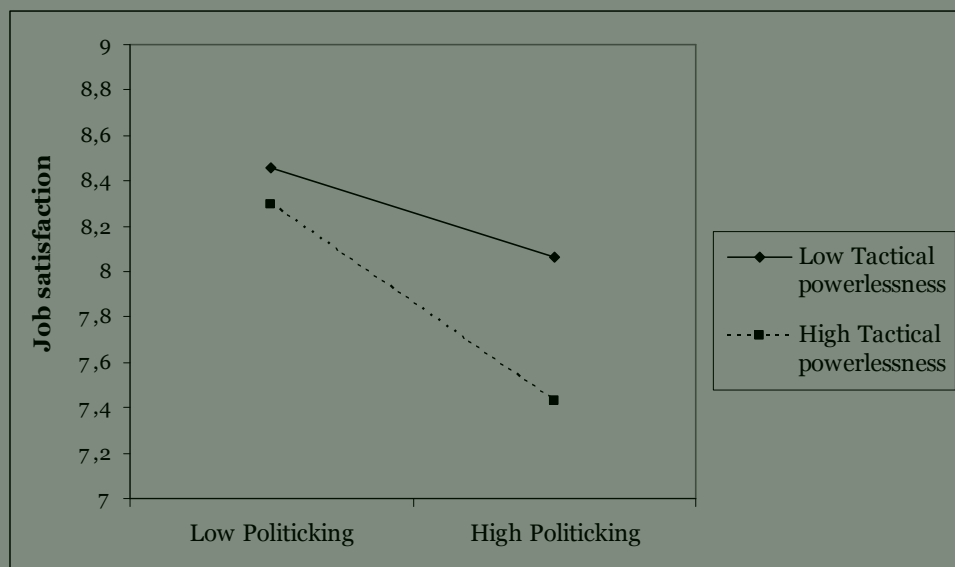
Figure 8.1 How the degree of tactical powerlessness in an organization influences the politicking -job satisfaction relationship

8.6 CONCLUSIONS

There is an intense debate on the pressures facing professionals in service delivery. In this article, we have examined how two important pressures – resulting from the implementation of a new policy and from organizational politics – influence the job satisfaction of professionals. Based on literature from the policy implementation and organizational politics streams, a theoretical model was constructed. This model was tested in a survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals who were implementing a new reimbursement policy. The model was successful to the extent that the policy alienation dimensions and politicking, together with conventional control variables, explained 19% of the variance in job satisfaction. This is a high percentage given the number of possible influences on job satisfaction.

More specifically, we can observe that operational powerlessness has a strongly negative effect on the job satisfaction of professionals. That is, when professionals feel that they have less autonomy when implementing a policy, they will be less satisfied with their jobs. This study adds to the literature by quantitatively showing the importance of perceived autonomy during policy implementation to the job satisfaction of professionals. This adds significance to those statements in the current debate on pressured professionals where scholars note that the autonomy of professionals – one of their defining characteristics - is declining (Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Freidson, 2001; Harrison & Ahmad, 2000). Where this is indeed the case, this could be particularly harmful to the job satisfaction of these professionals.

Secondly, we found that both tactical powerlessness and politicking negatively influence job satisfaction. Moreover, they reinforce each other: the effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction is strongest among professionals working in a highly politicized environment. This fits our theoretical model as influence is likely to reduce insecurity and increase control, by sharing power and information wherever possible, which is especially important in such a situation (Witt et al., 2000). This finding emphasizes the contextual nature of policy implementation by frontline professionals. It will be more relevant in some organizations than others to engage professionals in determining the way the organization implements a policy. Practitioners and scholars could use this insight to enhance their understanding of the way participation during policy implementation and the organizational context influence each other. As Elmore (1985) noted, policymaking can be viewed as a process of backward-mapping in which bargaining between local actors is a key element of successful implementation. Adding to this, we can state that involving professionals in these policy processes is especially important in organizations where there is a high level of perceived politics if one wants to avoid negative job attitudes.

As in all studies, this study has a number of limitations. Here, we discuss two important limitations. Firstly, the results of this study, and the implications outlined, should be interpreted in light of the study's limited context and sample. Although the study's generalizability was increased by the fact that the sample included a large number of public professionals, working in different occupations (albeit in a relatively narrow field), positions, and locations, one should be cautious in generalizing this to other public-sector policies or domains. An area for further research would be to test the proposed model on other types of policies in other public domains. Here, a comparative approach might work, examining different kinds of policies in various countries. A second limitation concerns the possible influence of context-dependent factors, such as specific management styles in parts of an organization or the way information is shared (how, when, with whom etc.). Our cross-sectional quantitative study did not explicitly examine this aspect and so a fruitful direction for future research would be to carry out qualitative case studies that examine such context-specific variables.

To sum up, this study provides insights that help to understand the pressures public professionals face in service delivery. An important conclusion is that having influence during policy implementation is especially important when there is a high degree of perceived politicking. This suggests one way of decreasing the negative effects of politicking on professionals. Embracing and further researching such ways to increase the quality of working life for

professionals in the public sector could be a productive endeavor for both researchers and practitioners alike.

9

Policy alienation and work alienation: Two separate worlds?

Abstract

The notion of work alienation has fascinated scholars and practitioners for a long time. In recent years, a related concept has been developed in the public administration discipline: policy alienation - the alienation of public professionals from the policy they have to implement. In this paper, our goal is to study the distinctiveness (or similarity) of work alienation and policy alienation. Further, we examine a number of effects of work and policy alienations. Based on a theoretical framework and a survey of 790 Dutch midwives, we show that work alienation and policy alienation are clearly distinct concepts. Furthermore, we show that work alienation has a strong impact on work level outcomes, such as work effort and intention to leave the organization. Policy alienation strongly influences the intention of a worker to resist a new policy, and the associated behavior. Hence, work and policy alienations have important and distinct effects. This study underlines the usefulness of work and policy alienation in sociological and public administration research.

9.1   Introduction

The alienation of employees from their work has intrigued scholars and practitioners for a long time. One of the key writers on alienation has been Karl Marx (1961 [1844]). Marx was inspired by the works of Hegel and Moses Hess, but was innovative in using the alienation concept in an economics sense: the alienation of labor (Kanungo, 1982:13; Vincent, 1989:22). For Marx, all sources of alienation stem from economic phenomena, such as waged labor and the division of labor. In the then new, industrial times, Marx saw that labor in itself had become alienating. Workers were alienated, he argues, because they did not own the results of their labor, nor the tools for producing these outputs.

Nowadays, the concept of work alienation is used by scholars in various disciplines, such as psychology and sociology of work and organization (Kanungo, 1982; Nair & Vohra, 2010; Sarros et al., 2002). However, they differ in one fundamental aspect from Marx. While Marx looked at *objective* work alienation (that is, workers are alienated because they do not own a product), contemporary scholars examine *subjective* work alienation (that is, workers *feel* alienated from their work (Kanungo, 1982:19)).

Also in the public administration literature, the concept of work alienation has not gone unnoticed. A number of scholars have used the concept, drawing on the alienation literature developed in both sociology and psychology. For instance, DeHart-Davis and Pandey (2005:134) have studied subjective work alienation, which they conceptualize "as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from work" (see also Kanungo, 1979:131). Furthermore, Pandey and Kingsley (2000) examined work alienation and showed that work alienation is a strong predictor of the degree of red tape experienced by public employees.

Recently, we have developed a new concept related to work alienation, termed policy alienation. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from the policy program being implemented by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients (Tummers et al., 2009). Although this concept has close links with subjective work alienation, it is theoretically different. Most importantly, it looks at alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. Furthermore, it focuses on professionals, whereas the more traditional alienation literature was mostly interested in blue-collar workers.

However, while the work and policy alienation concepts are theoretically different, it is unclear if this distinctiveness holds in the 'empirical' real world. In this paper, our main goal is to examine the distinctiveness of policy alienation and work alienation. Further, we study the effects of both work and policy alienation. We examine the influence of work and policy alienations

on two important outcomes on the job level: work effort (Gould-Williams, 2003) and the intention to leave the organization (D. P. Bozeman & Perrewé, 2001). Secondly, we examine their influence on two outcomes on the policy level: willingness/resistance to implement a policy (Judson, 1991; Metselaar, 1997) and behavioral support for a policy (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Examining the relationships and effects of work alienation and policy alienation is interesting for scholars. First, it can provide further evidence for the construct validity of the policy alienation concept (DeVellis, 2003; Tummers, forthcoming 2012). We would anticipate that policy alienation and work alienation correlate, but only to a limited degree. We also expect them to have different effects, thus providing evidence of their distinctiveness (or otherwise similarity). Further, we can investigate whether work and/or policy alienation significantly affect work effort, an intention to leave, and willingness to implement policies. If the influence is strong, this emphasizes the usefulness of these concepts for sociological and public administration research.

This study also has relevance for policymakers and managers. For instance, should managers focus on work or policy alienation (or neither or both) when trying to lower resistance to a specific policy? Some practitioners note that resistance to policies is not so much explained by the policy itself, but more by the negative way in which many employees perceive their work (J. Peters & Pouw, 2005). By theoretically and empirically distinguishing between the work level and the policy level, we can evaluate such claims.

This brings us to the outline of this article. In Section 9.2, we describe the work alienation and policy alienation concepts. We derive hypotheses concerning their interrelationship and their influence on important work-level indicators (work effort and intention to leave) and on policy-level indicators (willingness to implement and behavioral support for the policy). In Section 9.3, the method established for testing these hypotheses is outlined. In May 2011, we conducted a national survey among 1,278 Dutch midwives (790 respondents: a response rate 61%). The results of the survey, including hypothesis testing, are shown in Section 9.4. We conclude by discussing the contribution of this article to the public administration literature and to the debate on the alienation of public professionals.

9.2 Theoretical framework

9.2.1 Work alienation and policy alienation

Alienation broadly refers to a sense of social estrangement, an absence of social support or meaningful social connections. Sociologists, public administration scholars, and other social scientists have used the alienation concept in various studies. As a result, a number of meanings have been attributed to the term

(Kanungo, 1982:24). In an attempt to provide clarity, Seeman (1959) – in a landmark article - broke these meanings down into five alienation dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Given that there is no theoretical structure linking these five dimensions, and that the presence of all the dimensions is not required to feel alienated, scholars are effectively free to choose which dimensions best fit their research context (Rayce et al., 2008).

Many scholars have used these dimensions in devising operational measures for alienation so that they can examine the concept in a range of settings. Mau (1992), for example, used four dimensions in examining student alienation. Rayce et al. (2008), when investigating adolescent alienation, used three of the five dimensions. Further, many other researchers have used Seeman's classification in examining the concept of work alienation. An important study in this field is that of Blauner (1964), who devised operational measures for three of the dimensions: powerlessness, meaninglessness, and social isolation.

Alongside the work alienation concept, we use the concept of policy alienation (Tummers et al., 2009). As with work alienation, policy alienation is multidimensional, and consists of policy powerlessness and policy meaninglessness dimensions (for a more elaborate explanation, see Tummers, 2009).[1] The dimensions of powerlessness and meaninglessness are also considered very important in the work alienation literature (Kanungo, 1982; Seeman, 1959). For instance, DeHart-Davis and Pandey (2005:133) see powerlessness and meaninglessness as "the key psychological ingredients of alienation". Given these viewpoints, we will take both the powerlessness and meaninglessness dimensions into account, and on both the work level (work alienation) and the policy level (policy alienation).

In essence, powerlessness is a person's lack of control over events in their life. Regarding work alienation, Shepard (1971:13-14) defines powerlessness as "the perceived lack of freedom and control on the job". That is, workers feel themselves to be a thing, an object controlled and manipulated by others, or by an impersonal system. In the realm of policy formulation and implementation, policy powerlessness relates to the degree of influence (or rather the lack thereof) public professionals have over shaping a *policy program* (Lynch, Modgil, & Modgil, 1997:62).

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[1] The policy alienation concept further distinguishes sub-dimensions: strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness; and societal and client meaninglessness. We also carried out statistical analyses on the level of these sub-dimensions but this did not alter our conclusions. Therefore, we ignore these sub-dimensions in this chapter as this would and does not alter our conclusions and complicates the discussion on work and policy alienation.

The second dimension of work and policy alienation is meaninglessness. In general terms, Seeman (1959:786) notes that meaninglessness refers to an individual's sense of understanding of the events in which he or she is engaged. In the work setting, meaninglessness may occur "when workers are not able to understand the complex system of goals in the organization and its relationship to their own work" (Kanungo, 1982:26). In the policymaking and implementation realm, policy meaninglessness refers to a professional's perception of the contribution that a policy makes to a greater purpose, most notably to society or to their own clients. For instance, a professional can feel that implementing a policy is meaningless if it does not deliver any apparent beneficial outcomes for society, such as greater safety on the streets (Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002).

Based on the above discussion, we see that work and policy alienation are related, but distinct, concepts. They are both based on a solid alienation tradition. Furthermore, they both have powerlessness and meaninglessness dimensions and are subjective in nature (they relate to perceptions). However, they focus on clearly different levels. While the work alienation concept looks to the general work level, the policy alienation term examines alienation on the more specific policy level. As a consequence, it is possible that a worker feels alienated from a certain policy, but not from their work. A good example would be an insurance physician who cannot identify with a new policy that is focused on stricter rules for granting workers a disability benefit, but is generally very happy with and involved in his or her work. Conversely, a teacher could be alienated from their work in general, but still derive some satisfaction from a new policy that gives increased attention to helping children with learning disabilities. Based on this discussion, we hypothesize that the concepts of work alienation and policy alienation can also be clearly distinguished in empirical analyses. Hence, we hypothesize that:

H1: Work alienation and policy alienation are distinct concepts.

9.2.2 Influences at the work level: on work effort and intention to leave

We aim to study possible effects of work and policy alienation. First, we look at two important effects on the work level: on work effort and on intention to leave a job. We selected these effects as they can be considered important in terms of organizational performance. In examining work effort, McAllister (1995:33) noted that employees need to exert extra effort if higher levels of performance are to be achieved: "organizations depend on the discretionary contributions of their members to maintain efficiency and coordination; one has only to witness the disruption that occurs when employees limit their contributions exclusively

to what is specified in their job descriptions to realize that this is the case". That is, it seems paramount for organizations that their employees 'go the extra mile'. However, Kinicki et al. (1992, see also Gould-Williams, 2003) argue that there appears to be a growing trend among workers to underperform, or to exert as little effort as possible. It therefore seems important to consider the effort that workers put into their work, and which factors determine the level of that effort.

Intention to leave refers to the desire of an employee to quit their current job. Of course, not all employees who intend to leave their job will actually do so (D. G. Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005). Nevertheless, scholars and human resource managers often treat turnover intentions as the most direct precursor of turnover behavior (see also Ajzen, 1991). Further, a number of studies have found that intention to leave one's position is a good proxy for actual turnover (Bluedorn, 1982; Lee & Mowday, 1987). When employees leave their job, this is an important event. For organizations, it can involve substantial costs, such as fees for recruiting and hiring new employees, the loss of tacit knowledge, and continuity problems.

We would expect the extent of alienation (especially of work alienation) to negatively influence the degree of effort workers put into their work. Cummings and Manring (1977) noted that powerlessness and meaninglessness were negatively related to self-related effort and performance. Arnold et al. (2007:195) similarly observed that "higher purpose [or less meaninglessness] was associated with increased job satisfaction, perceptions of unit cohesion, and work effort". Further, Hackman and Oldham (1980) argue that autonomy and experienced meaningfulness at work can be expected to increase internal work motivation, and that this is strongly related to work effort.

We also expect that the various dimensions of alienation (especially the work alienation sub-dimensions) to influence the intention of employees to leave. The mechanism relating powerlessness to intention to leave can be traced back to the human relations movement (McGregor, 1960). One of the central tenets of this movement is that employees have a right to make inputs into decisions that affect their lives. Further, employees enjoy carrying out decisions they were involved in making. Also, employees can feel recognized if they are given the opportunity to make decisions themselves. This recognition is known to motivate and satisfy employees, making them less inclined to leave. Here, the human relations movement predicts that employees who experience powerlessness increase their intention to leave because their intrinsic employee needs are not fulfilled (Wagner III, 1994). In examining the influence of meaninglessness on intention to leave, we would therefore expect meaningless work to increase the intention to leave. Hackman and Oldham (1976), using their Job Diagnostic Model, argue that experienced work meaningfulness is one

of the three critical influences on personal and work outcomes (such as intention to stay).

To summarize, we expect that, if employees experience powerlessness and meaninglessness, they will (a) put less effort into their work and (b) be more inclined to leave their job. More specifically, we expect that this is particularly true for powerlessness and meaninglessness related to *work*, and less so for *policy* powerlessness and meaninglessness. This is because work effort and intention to leave are measured on the general, i.e. work, level, and this is consonant with the dimensions of work alienation. In comparison, the dimensions of policy alienation are measured on the policy level. This anticipated difference reflects the observation of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) that variables relate most strongly to each other when they are on the same level of specificity. Consequently, we develop the following two hypotheses:

H2: The work alienation dimensions have a greater influence on work effort than the policy alienation dimensions.
H3: The work alienation dimensions have a greater influence on intention to leave than the policy alienation dimensions.

9.2.3 Policy level effects: willingness to implement a policy and behavioral support

Work effort and intention to leave are measured on the work level. Alongside these, we take into account two important effects that are measured on the policy level: willingness to implement the policy and behavioral support for the policy.

These two concepts are both derived from the change management literature, which has a long history of examining willingness or resistance to change, such as a new policy. Metselaar (1997:42) defines change willingness as "a positive behavioral intention towards the implementation of modifications in an organization's structure, or work and administrative processes, resulting in efforts from the organization member's side to support or enhance the change process". Throughout change management history, it is has been fairly consistently claimed that a crucial condition for success is that employees are willing to implement the change (Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Judson, 1991). In our situation, the change equates to the policy the professionals have to implement.

Behavioral support for a change (in this case, a policy) is reflected in the actions that employees take to support or resist a change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). For instance, professionals may go above and beyond what is formally required to ensure the success of a policy and promote it to others. This is termed 'championing'. At the other end of the continuum, professionals can demonstrate strong opposition to a new policy by engaging in overt behaviors

that are intended to ensure that the policy fails. An example is the reaction of some psychologists and psychotherapists to the DRG policy (www.dbcvrij.nl; Palm et al. (2008); see also Chapter 6). Some professionals demonstrated against this policy, and established associations which explicitly campaigned against the policy, such as the Foundation of DRG-free Practices.

Behavioral support for a policy is related to, but logically independent of, willingness to implement a policy. Behavioral support examines the actual behavior of professionals regarding a policy, such as compliance or championing. Willingness to implement, on the other hand, examines the *intention to put effort* into the implementation of a policy. As such, two professionals may be equally intent on putting effort into implementing a policy (i.e. have the same level of willingness to implement), but one of them may be merely compliant (a medium level of behavioral support), while the other persuades colleagues to embrace the change (a high level of behavioral support).

We expect that when the degree of policy powerlessness or meaninglessness increases, the willingness to implement a policy and behavioral support will both decrease. From examinations of powerlessness, it is now well-established that an increase in employee influence on change decisions leads to increased commitment and performance, and reduces resistance to change (Tummers, 2011a; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). For instance, Sagie and Koslowsky (1994) reported that influence in decision-making was positively related to acceptance among individual employees in five Israeli public organizations.

In the change management literature, the notion of a 'case for change' is closely related to the meaninglessness concept. In both theory and practice, it is often noted that a case for change has to be vehemently made if it is to increase the willingness to implement a change and the associated behavioral support (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). This case for change can stress that there are better ways of doing things - better for the organization, better for the employees, and better for customers. Developing a case for change is often an important step in planned change approaches. For instance, Higgs and Rowland (2005:127) note that creating a case for change is the first area of leadership competency to be associated with successful change implementation. Once employees agree that a change has good and necessary objectives, they should be more supportive of this change. In other words, when employees experience a policy as meaningful, they will be more willing to implement it and will show more positive behavior regarding the policy.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the relationship between powerlessness, meaninglessness, and willingness to implement a policy and behavioral support for it seems particularly related to *policy* powerlessness and

meaninglessness, and less so to *work* powerlessness and meaninglessness. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H4: The policy alienation dimensions have a greater influence on the willingness to implement the policy than the work alienation dimensions.

H5: The policy alienation dimensions have a greater influence on behavioral support for a policy than the work alienation dimensions.

9.3 METHOD

9.3.1 Testing the proposed model through a survey of Dutch midwives

To test the hypotheses, we undertook a survey of Dutch midwives. Midwifery involves caring for childbearing women during pregnancy, labor, and birth, and also during the postpartum period. A practitioner of midwifery is known as a midwife, a term used to refer to both women and men, although the majority are admittedly female.

In the Netherlands, midwives have had to implement a new governmental policy known as 'structural ultrasound assessment' (Structureel Echosopisch Onderzoek, SEO), or the twenty-week ultrasound. From 2007 on, this assessment is part of the Law on the Medical Examination of the Population (WBO, Wet Bevolkingsonderzoek) as recorded in the Dutch State journal 'Staatsblad', 1997, 581. When a woman is 20-22 weeks pregnant, she has to visit a midwife who, using ultrasound techniques, examines the unborn child. The midwife examines the health of the child, especially their physical development. Midwives also look at the growth of the child and determine whether there is sufficient amniotic fluid. This ultrasound can be very important for the parents and for the unborn child. First, defects may be detected which can already be treated before the child is born. Second, it can be valuable if there is knowledge of some defects prior to birth, so measures can be taken immediately after birth. Third, in the Netherlands it is possible for the parents to decide to have an abortion based on the ultrasound results. This is seen as a negative aspect of the policy by some midwives. Fourth, midwives have observed that the results can generate a lot on anxiety for the parents if defects are detected but, as not everything is clear after twenty weeks of pregnancy, this anxiety is sometimes unfounded. Overall, it seems that the structural ultrasound assessment is a significant policy, and that midwives can have opinions regarding this policy. We now examine the degree of policy alienation that midwives feel from this policy, and its effects.

9.3.2 Sampling and response

To study work alienation and policy alienation, and their effects, we used a sample of 1,278 midwives based on the databases of the nationwide associations for midwives (KNOV) and for midwife ultrasound specialists (BEN). We asked the midwives to respond to the online survey, using an introductory email (directly where possible, otherwise through their employing organizations) and two reminders. Further, a student-assistant contacted all the organizations by telephone and encouraged them to stimulate their employees to complete the survey. Through these efforts, we received 790 returns, a response of 61%.

Our student-assistant phoned a number of the midwives who did not complete the survey to find out why (a non-response check). The non-response assessment did not indicate any potential biases in our sample. The main reasons given were (a) current workload (i.e. too busy), (b) the fact that they had already completed a number of surveys, and (c) they were not involved with the ultrasound process.

Of the valid respondents, 768 (97.2%) were women and 22 (2.8%) men, reflecting the occupation's traditionally female origins. Recent results from an annual national survey by the research institution Nivel show that 98% of midwives are female (Nivel, 2010). Our respondents' average age was 40, slightly older than the Dutch average for midwives which is 37 (Nivel, 2010). As such, our respondents' mean age and gender-distribution are similar to those of the overall midwife population.

9.3.3 Measures

Work alienation – Powerlessness

Work powerlessness was measured using a 7-item scale developed by Mottaz (1981). Sample items are "My daily tasks are largely determined by others' and "I have a good deal of freedom in the performance of my daily task" (R). The Cronbach alpha of our results was adequate (.77).

Work alienation – Meaninglessness

We also used the work of Mottaz in measuring work meaninglessness. Sample items were "Sometimes I am not sure I completely understand the purpose of what I'm doing", "I often wonder what the importance of my job really is" and "My work is really important and worthwhile" (R). In the current study, the Cronbach alpha for this scale was .85.

Policy alienation – Powerlessness

Policy powerlessness had been measured in a previous study (see Chapter 5) where we distinguished between strategic, tactical, and operational

powerlessness. In the midwife study, we combine these three aspects in one measure of policy powerlessness following the suggestions in Tummers (forthcoming 2012) on how to average the three levels to create one measure of powerlessness. Sample items were "When I work with the twenty-week ultrasound policy, I have to adhere to tight procedures" and "In my opinion, midwives had too little power to influence the policy". The Cronbach alpha for this scale was .82.

Policy alienation - Meaninglessness
In measuring policy meaninglessness, we used the policy meaninglessness scales developed in Tummers (forthcoming 2012). Sample items were "The policy is contributing to the welfare of my clients" (R) and "As a result of the policy, I can help clients better than before" (R). For this scale, the Cronbach alpha was .87.

Intention to leave
Intention to leave was measured using the scale of Bozeman and Perrewé (2001). Sample items are "I will probably look for a new job in the near future" and "I do not intend to quit my job" (R). In the present study, the Cronbach alpha for this scale was .89.

Work effort
In order to study work effort, we used the work of Gould-Williams (2004) who had developed an eight-item measure to capture employee discretionary effort. Sample items are "I stay late if necessary to help out" and "I volunteer for things that are not part of the job". In our study, the scale's Cronbach's alpha was .76.

Willingness to implement policy
We measured willingness to implement the policy using a five-item scale which had previously shown good reliability (Metselaar, 1997). Metselaar developed the concept of 'willingness to change' and, in this study, the change refers to the introduction of the twenty-week ultrasound assessment. Sample items are: "I am willing to contribute to the twenty-week ultrasound assessment" and "I am willing to free up time to implement the twenty-week ultrasound assessment". The scale's Cronbach's alpha was .85.

Behavioral support for the policy
Behavioral support for the policy was measured based on the work of Herscovitch and Meyer (2002). They developed the concept of 'behavioral support for change' that reflected a range of resisting and supportive behavior.

Behavioral support for the twenty-week ultrasound assessment change is measured using a 101 continuum. Based on Herscovitch and Meyer, descriptions along the continuum were labeled from left to right as active resistance (0-20 points), passive resistance (21-40), compliance (31-60), cooperation (61-80), and championing (81-100). The respondents had to indicate a number (between 0 and 100) representing their reaction to the twenty-week ultrasound assessment policy change.

Further, a written description of each of the anchor points was provided. Active resistance was defined as demonstrating opposition to the twenty-week ultrasound assessment by engaging in overt resistant behaviors, such as demonstrations. Passive resistance was defined as demonstrating opposition by engaging in covert or subtle behaviors aimed at preventing the success of this policy. Compliance was defined as demonstrating minimal support for the policy by going along with it, but only doing so reluctantly. Cooperation was defined as demonstrating support by exerting effort when it came to this policy, going along with the spirit of it, and being prepared to make modest sacrifices. Championing was defined as demonstrating extreme enthusiasm for the new assessment by going beyond what is formally required to ensure its success and promoting the twenty-week ultrasound assessment to others.

Control variables

Alongside the variables described above, we included commonly used control variables in our regression analysis. That is, potential differences due to these variables are controlled for in the analyses. We took into account gender, age, management position (yes/no) and level of education. We coded the level of education as follows: 1=elementary school, 2=secondary education, 3= intermediate vocational training (Dutch: MBO), 4= higher professional education (Dutch: HBO), 5=University (Dutch: WO) and 6=post-academic education (PhD or specialization).

9.4 Results

9.4.1 Descriptive statistics and the relationship between work alienation and policy alienation

Descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables are presented in Table 9.1:

Table 9.1 Descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables in the study

	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Female (male=ref.cat)	.97	NA	1											
2.	Age	40.1	1.9	-.14**	1										
3.	Education	4.1	.4	.02	.07*	1									
4.	Managing position (non-managing = ref. cat)	.2	NA	-.01	.08*	.07	1								
5.	Work Powerlessness	3.5	1.2	-.02	.13**	.08*	-.16**	1							
6.	Work Meaninglessness	2.7	.9	.00	.15**	-.02	-.12**	.42**	1						
7.	Policy Powerlessness	5.6	1.2	-.07	-.16**	.00	-.15**	.06	-.03	1					
8.	Policy Meaninglessness	4.6	1.0	.01	-.03	.02	-.05	.01	.09*	.23**	1				
9.	Work effort	8.1	1.0	.01	.00	.05	.23**	-.26**	-.34**	-.10**	-.12**	1			
10.	Intention to leave	2.8	1.9	-.03	.02	.07	-.02	.21**	.24**	.01	.04	-.15**	1		
11.	Willingness to implement policy	6.2	1.6	-.02	.16**	.03	.01	.03	-.01	-.23**	-.30**	.18**	-.06	1	
12.	Behavioral support for the policy	73.1	15.8	-.05	.13**	.01	.05	-.01	-.03	-.21**	-.40**	.21**	-.13**	.36**	1

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01. Scores for variables 5 to 11 are rescaled onto a ten-point range (1-10) to aid interpretation.

Before interpreting the descriptive statistics, we must consider the possibility of common method bias: that is, variance that is due to the measurement method rather than the constructs themselves (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). It is known that self-reported data based on a single application of a questionnaire can result in inflated relationships between variables due to this common method variance. To check for this, we conducted a Harman one-factor test to evaluate the extent to which common method variance was a concern. A factor analysis was conducted on all the items used to measure the variables covered by the hypotheses. The factors that emerged together accounted for 75% of the total variance (using the 'eigenvalue > 1' criterion) and the most significant factor accounted for less than half of the variance (only 12%). Given that more than one factor emerged, and that the largest factor did not account for a majority of the variance, common method variance would not seem to be a major concern here.

Hypothesis 1 states that work alienation and policy alienation are distinct concepts that can only be related to a limited degree. As can be seen from Table 9.1 (underlined scores), the dimensions of work and policy alienation are indeed only moderately related. Only one correlation is significant, between work and policy meaninglessness, and then only moderately (r=.09). Furthermore, the factor analyses show that the policy and work alienation concepts are rather different (as they load onto different factors). Hence, we can conclude that work alienation and policy alienation are distinct concepts. In the next section, we will analyze whether the effects of work and policy alienation are similarly distinct.

9.4.2 Results – The effects of work alienation and policy alienation

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to test Hypotheses 2, 3, 4, and 5, see Table 9.2. Hypothesis 2 states that the work alienation dimensions have a higher influence on work effort (a work-level measure) than the policy alienation dimensions. The regression results show that this is indeed the case. Work powerlessness and work meaninglessness both have a significant and negative influence on the amount of effort employees put into their work (β=-.12, p<.01 and β=-.27 p<.01 respectively). The policy alienation dimensions were far less influential (β=-.05, p=n.s. and β=-.07 p<.05 respectively). This means that when employees feel their influence over their work is limited, or find their work meaningless, they will put less effort into their work.

Hypothesis 3 argues that the work alienation dimensions have a greater influence on intention to leave (a work-level measure) than the policy alienation dimensions. Our empirical data indeed show that this is the case. When midwives feel alienated from their work, they are more inclined to look for

another job (β=-.14, p<.01 for work powerlessness; β=-.19 p<.01 for work meaninglessness). On the other hand, the policy alienation dimensions were not significant in explaining intention to leave.

The fourth and fifth hypotheses examine the effects of work and policy alienation on the policy level. In Hypothesis 4, we expected the policy alienation dimensions to have a greater influence on the willingness to implement a policy than the work alienation dimensions. This proved to be the case with the policy we were examining. The greater the policy alienation that midwives experienced, the less they were willing to implement the policy (policy powerlessness: β=-.16, p<.01; policy meaninglessness: β=-.26 p<.01 respectively). As anticipated, the work alienation dimensions were far less relevant and were insignificant when it came to explaining willingness to implement public policies.

Our final hypothesis (5) was formulated as follows: 'The policy alienation dimensions have a greater influence on behavioral support for a policy than the work alienation dimensions.' As can be seen in Table 9.2 below, our empirical data support this hypothesis. The policy alienation dimensions, and especially the policy meaninglessness dimension, have a strong influence on behavioral support for the twenty-week ultrasound assessment (β=-.11, p<.01; β=-.37 p<.01 respectively). However, the extent of work alienation did not significantly influence behavioral support for the policy.

Table 9.2 Regression analyses for effects of work and policy alienation dimensions

	Work level Effects on work effort		Work level Effects on intention to leave		Policy level Effects on willingness to implement policy		Policy level Effects on behavioral support for the policy	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	9.23	NA	.36	NA	8.26	NA	104.90	NA
Control variables								
Female (male=ref.cat)	.05	.01	-.35	-.03	-.14	-.01	-4.22	-.04
Age	.00	.03	-.01	-.04	.02	.12**	.15	.10
Education	.08	.04	.25	.06	.10	.03	.28	.01
Managing position (non-managing = ref. cat)	.41	.16**	.12	.02	-.15	-.04	.11	.00
Work alienation dimensions								
Powerlessness	-.10	**-.12****	.22	**.14****	.04	**.03**	-.25	**-.02**
Meaninglessness	-.29	**-.27****	.38	**.19****	-.05	**-.03**	-.04	**.00**
Policy alienation dimensions								
Powerlessness	-.04	**-.05**	.00	**.00**	-.21	**-.16****	-1.42	**-.11****
Meaninglessness	-.07	**-.07***	.04	**.02**	-.42	**-.26****	-5.65	**-.37****
Overall R²		.18		.08		.13		.19
Overall F		17.69**		7.00**		12.39**		19.07**

The following criteria are met for all three regression analyses (see also Field, 2005): Criterion of independent residuals (Durbin-Watson 2.0/1.9/1.9/1.8, 1<criterion<3). Criterion of no multicollinearity (no VIF values above 10 and average close to 1, for all regressions). No exclusion of influential outlying cases was required (using casewise diagnostics: 3.2%/3.8%/3.4/3.7% above standardized residual >|2|. Cook's distance max. .09/.08/.06/.2 (criterion < 1). Criteria of homoscedasticity and normality met.

Note: * p < .05 ** p < .01.

9.5   Conclusions and discussion

We started this paper with the assertion that the alienation of employees has been intriguing scholars and practitioners for a considerable time. An important concept here is the notion of subjective work alienation, which can be considered as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from work. Based on the work alienation and public administration literatures, a new concept has been developed: policy alienation, defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from a policy being implemented by a professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients. In this paper, our main goal was to study the relationships and effects linking work and policy alienation. In this way, we aimed to (a) show whether work alienation and policy alienation were empirically distinct concepts in order to provide further evidence for the construct validity of policy alienation and (b) emphasize (or nuance) the usefulness of these concepts, given their effects on important indicators on the work and policy levels.

Based on literature from the sociology of work and organization, public administration, change management, and HRM fields, a number of hypotheses were constructed that could be used to examine the relationships between, and the effects of, work and policy alienation. These hypotheses were tested in a survey of 790 Dutch midwives. We showed that work alienation and policy alienation were clearly distinct concepts. First, because the dimensions of work and policy alienation were poorly correlated. Further, work alienation and policy alienation had very different effects. The work alienation dimensions were highly influential on important work-level indicators, such as work effort and intention to leave. Conversely, the policy alienation dimensions influenced indicators on the policy level (implementation willingness and behavioral support for the change). This finding concurs with the view of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), who noted that variables relate most strongly to each other when they are on the same level of specificity.

Hence, our first conclusion is that work alienation and policy alienation are clearly distinct concepts. This has implications for both practitioners and scholars. For practitioners, it means that the statement that resistance to policies is explained by the degree of work alienation of employees (J. Peters & Pouw, 2005) is open to question. Practitioners, such as policymakers and managers should take this into account and could try to positively influence the willingness to implement a new policy by, for instance, making interventions aimed at increasing the perceived influence of professionals on the policy level (decreasing their policy powerlessness), rather than simply stating that it is impossible to gain acceptance for a policy. For scholars, it provides further evidence that the policy alienation framework has construct validity. The policy

alienation concept has been shown to be helpful when examining the experiences of employees with new policies. By properly distinguishing between work alienation and policy alienation, scholars can increase their understanding of different aspects of the working life of professionals. In a similar vein, Meyer and Herscovitch made a distinction between different levels and types of commitment (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). In a subsequent study (2002), they showed that commitment to a change and commitment to an organization were clearly different concepts, and this has had important implications for research and practice.

Our second conclusion is that policy alienation and work alienation are both useful concepts, especially given their strong effects on important indicators on the work and job levels. When professionals feel alienated from their *work*, this reduces the effort they put into it and heightens their intention to leave their job. If professionals feel alienated from a *policy*, this decreases their willingness to implement it and reduces their behavioral support for the change. Given the outcomes of this study, we argue that the concept of alienation should remain an important concept in organization studies. As a topic, it was widely studied up to the end of the 1980s but since then seems to have fallen out of fashion. McKinlay and Marceau (2011) similarly stress the importance of the alienation framework. In a recent study entitled 'New wine in an old bottle: does alienation provide an explanation of the origins of physician discontent?' they analyzed the discontent of physicians and conclude that:

> *"The classic concept of alienation may build upon valuable earlier work and provide a new, coherent explanation of the workplace origins of physician discontent. Alienation theory combines both structural and psychological components associated with workplace discontent and has the potential to explain the changing position of knowledge workers (such as physicians) in the new economy."*

We agree with this statement. Apart from highlighting the usefulness of the alienation concept, we would also urge scholars to conceptualize and measure different types of alienation, specified for the particular research problem addressed. For example, scholars could study not only policy alienation but also alienation from their managers (manager alienation) or from administrative rules and regulations (alienation from red tape) (cf. Pandey & Scott, 2002).

In our final conclusion, we highlight the importance of work and policy *meaninglessness*. In this study, we examined the dimensions of powerlessness and meaninglessness; and, in the results section, we showed that, for all the

effects considered, the meaninglessness dimensions were more important than those relating to powerlessness. For instance, if professionals experience that their work has become more meaningless, this will have a far greater effect on their work than when they experience an increase in powerlessness. Many investigations into HRM, organization studies, and change management have looked at the degree of powerlessness, or influence, in general decision-making or during organizational changes of those involved (Bouma, 2009; Jackson, 1983; Judson, 1991). For instance, Judson (1991) argues that participation is the most powerful lever to gain acceptance for a change. However, given the results of this study, we would urge practitioners and scholars to center their attention on the perceived meaninglessness of work or of a policy, rather than focus on aspects of powerlessness. For instance, managers could think about ways to improve the perceived added value of the work that professionals do. One way could be to better communicate the results achieved by the professionals. The issue of Public Service Motivation (PSM) (Perry, 1996) is related to this as Brewer and Selden (1998:417) describe PSM as "the motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public service".

As with all studies, this study has a number of limitations. An important limitation is that we only analyzed one group of public professionals, that is Dutch midwives. The results of this study, and the implications outlined, should be interpreted in light of this limited context and sample. An area for further research would be to test the proposed model on other types of policies in a range of public domains. Here, a comparative approach could work well, examining different kinds of policies in various countries.

A second limitation concerns the method used. In this study, we used quantitative analyses to examine the degree of work and policy alienation, and their effects. A qualitative approach could also have been applied, and this would have increased the understanding of the context in which these public professionals work. This approach can be very beneficial when examining sociological/psychological phenomena such as subjective alienation. Hence, a sequential strategy could be suggested: starting with a quantitative approach, followed by a qualitative approach to further understand and contextualize the feelings and perceptions of the professionals (see also Holloway & Wheeler, 2009:19).

To sum up, this study shows that work and policy alienation are clearly distinct concepts, and that they can be very useful in analyzing the experiences of professionals with their work or with the policy they have to implement.

10

Conclusions and discussion

10.1 Introducing the conclusions

The goal of this study was to enhance understanding of the experiences of public professionals with new policies they have to implement. This is an important topic as many examples show that professionals in various settings have problems with the policies they have to implement (see Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; Palm et al., 2008; White, 1996). In order to enhance our understanding of this topic, we developed the concept of policy alienation.

This concluding chapter has three aims. Fist, in the next section (Section 10.2), we aim to answer the research questions. Second, our aim is to examine the 'bigger picture': what conclusions can be drawn from this study and what does this study contribute to the literature and to practice? This is discussed in Section 10.3, where we consider our six main conclusions. Third, we aim to provide a research agenda for studies on policy alienation in the coming years (Section 10.4).

10.2 Answering the research questions of this study

This study set out to answer the following main research question:

How can the policy alienation of public professionals be conceptualized and measured, and what are its influencing factors and effects?

The main research question breaks down into four research questions:

1. How to conceptualize the policy alienation of public professionals?
2. What are the main factors that influence policy alienation?
3. How can policy alienation be measured?
4. What are the main effects of policy alienation?

The answers to these four questions will together lead to the answer to the main research question. The answers to the research questions are shown graphically in Figure 10.1. This figure has a close link with Figure 1.1 which showed a schematic overview of the study based on the research questions.
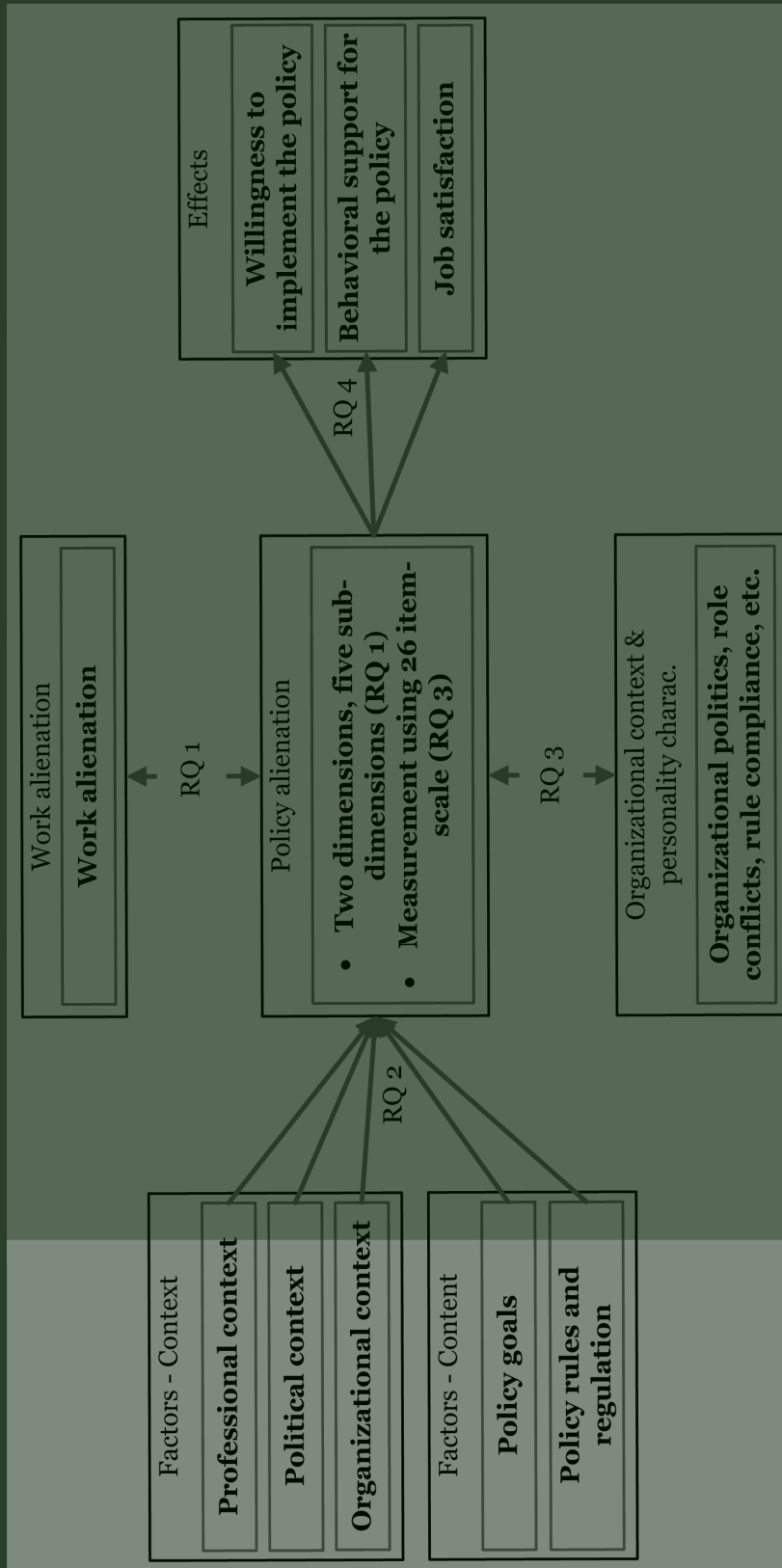
Figure 10.1 Graphical answer to the four research questions

10.2.1 Policy alienation can best be conceptualized using five sub-dimensions (RQ 1)

The first research question concerns the conceptualization of policy alienation. In Chapter 2, we provided a historical overview of the alienation concept. It started with the different meanings attached to alienation in linguistic, theological, and political way. Next, we considered the 'founding fathers' of alienation, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx. Marx was influenced by Hegel, but an important difference is that Marx was the first to speak of alienation of labor, rather than the more abstract spiritual alienation discussed by Hegel. Next, we examined the works of two leading scholars from the 'Frankfurter Schule', Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. They used the alienation concept to discuss the alienating tendencies of 'Western Society' in the 1950s and 1960s.

In our study, the concept of alienation is applied in the public domain, where public professionals implement public policies. We therefore explored the relationship between alienation, the nature of the public sector, and public policies. Drawing on the works of Weber and Merton, we saw how bureaucratic features (which are prevalent in the public domain) could give rise to alienation. For instance, Max Weber noted that the rationalizing elements of a bureaucracy can give rise to alienation. Applying rationality reduces transactions to a number of essential parts, each of which could be carried out by a single individual. In this way, bureaucrats can become 'cogs in a machine', alienated from their work and/or from citizens. They will not see how their work relates to the overall structure, and hence feel that their work is meaningless. Michael Lipsky focused specifically on the alienating tendencies of the work of street-level bureaucrats. In his view, street-level work is inherently alienating. He stresses classical features of work alienation, such as being unable to control the pace of work and working only on segments of the product.

From examining these analyses, we concluded that the concepts of alienation, bureaucracy, and policy implementation are inherently connected. Based on this, Chapter 3 conceptualized policy alienation. Building upon insights from the literature on work alienation (Blauner, 1964; Kanungo, 1982; Marx, 1961 [1844]; Sarros et al., 2002; Seeman, 1959) and public administration literature (DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Easton, 1965; Freidson, 2001; Lipsky, 1980; Stone, 2003; Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002) an initial policy alienation framework was developed, which was then tested in an exploratory study involving insurance physicians and labor experts. As with work alienation, policy alienation was seen as a multidimensional concept. Viewed in this way, it has similarities with some well-known concepts in the social sciences, such as public service motivation, organizational commitment, and naturally work

alienation. In our first exploratory study, policy alienation was assumed to consist of three dimensions: policy powerlessness, policy meaninglessness, and role conflicts.

Policy powerlessness relates to the degree of influence public professionals have in shaping the policy program they have to implement. This influence may be exercised on strategic, tactical, or operational levels. As such, strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness are considered sub-dimensions of policy alienation. Policy meaninglessness relates to a professional's perception of the contribution the policy makes to a greater purpose. As with powerlessness, meaninglessness had three sub-dimensions: strategic meaninglessness, tactical meaninglessness, and operational meaninglessness. Finally, the role conflicts dimension was considered. When implementing a policy, professionals experience demands based on various logics, which stress different values and norms, and have a legitimacy of their own. Role conflicts arise when professionals perceive these demands to be incompatible. The role conflict concept acknowledges the multiple logics that a professional has to deal with when implementing a policy. For instance, when implementing a policy, professionals can face demands from the rules and regulations of the policy they have to implement, but also from the clients they respond to. These demands can conflict with one another and, if professionals experience this, a role conflict is present.

This initial conceptualization of policy alienation has been refined through subsequent studies, which are documented in Chapters 4-9. Most significantly, the role conflict dimension was dropped altogether. It is not that it does not exist but rather that it is no longer considered a dimension of policy alienation but as a separate concept, possibly an outcome of policy alienation. The main reason for this change is that, in the alienation literature, role conflicts are generally not considered as a dimension of alienation (Blauner, 1964; DeHart-Davis & Pandey, 2005; Kanungo, 1982). Rather, role conflicts are considered an effect of numerous sub-dimensions of policy alienation (Kottkamp & Mansfield, 1985; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2008; Organ & Greene, 1981). For instance, Morgeson and Humphrey (2008:451) note that "autonomy [≈ low operational powerlessness, LT] has been shown to reduce cognitive outcomes, such as role ambiguity ($\rho = -.23$) and role conflict ($\rho = -.17$)". Second, by taking this standpoint, the policy alienation concept remains as parsimonious as possible.

Further, we also adapted the meaninglessness dimension by dropping tactical meaninglessness. During the empirical analyses for developing the policy alienation scale (Chapter 5) it was observed that tactical meaninglessness correlated more strongly with tactical powerlessness ($r = .38$) than with either

strategic (r = .26) or tactical (r = .28) meaninglessness. Moreover, when forcing a two-factor solution, it fell within the powerlessness factor. That is, it did not fit well within the meaninglessness dimension, and could be better viewed as an effect of tactical powerlessness. This is consistent with the change management literature on participation in organizations (Strauss, Heller, Pusic, Strauss, & Wilpert, 1998). As such, tactical meaninglessness is theoretically and empirically closer to tactical powerlessness than to the other dimensions of meaninglessness and, on this basis, we removed it from our meaninglessness dimension. It can be better viewed as an effect of tactical powerlessness. After dropping tactical meaninglessness, we adapted the names of strategic and operational meaninglessness into societal meaninglessness and client meaninglessness since we felt these names to be more informative and to better reflect the definitions of these concepts.

To summarize, we conceptualized the policy alienation framework based on theoretical insights from the work alienation and public administration literatures, and explored and tested this framework in a number of empirical analyses. We concluded that a policy framework consisting of two dimensions (powerlessness and meaninglessness) and five sub-dimensions (strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness, plus societal and client meaninglessness) was the most realistic based on both theoretical and empirical arguments. This final policy alienation framework is shown in Figure 10.2.

Further, we were able to show that policy alienation is indeed different to work alienation. In Chapter 3, we argued that the policy alienation and work alienation concepts were different. Most critically, policy alienation relates to alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. In Chapter 9, based on a survey of 790 midwives, we showed empirically that policy alienation and work alienation were indeed different concepts.

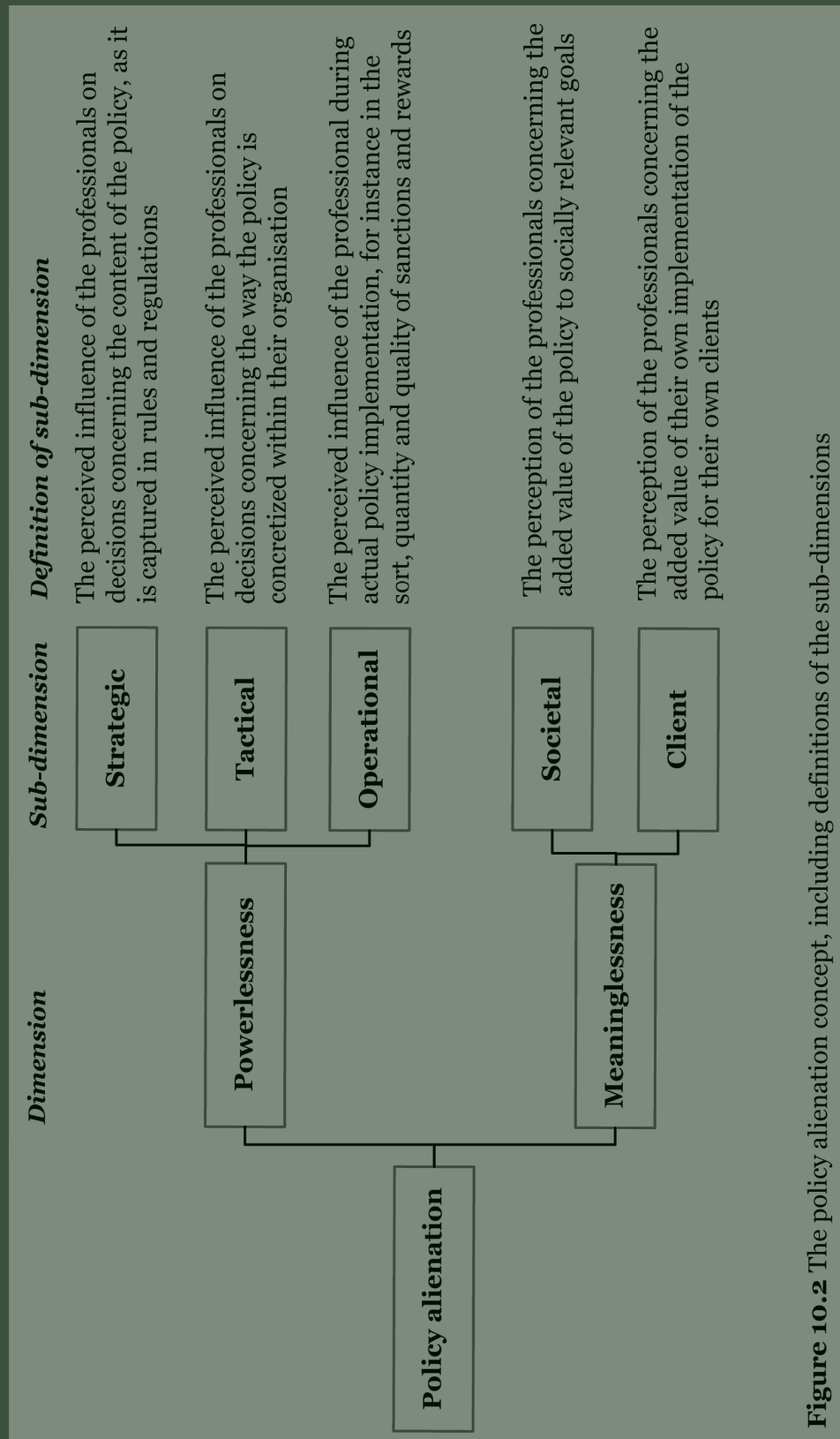| Dimension	Sub-dimension	Definition of sub-dimension
Policy alienation **Powerlessness**	**Strategic**	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as it is captured in rules and regulations
	Tactical	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the way the policy is concretized within their organisation
	Operational	The perceived influence of the professional during actual policy implementation, for instance in the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards
Meaninglessness	**Societal**	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals
	Client	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of their own implementation of the policy for their own clients

Figure 10.2 The policy alienation concept, including definitions of the sub-dimensions

10.2.2 Context and content are both important in explaining policy alienation (RQ 2)

The second research question sought to determine which factors are important in explaining policy alienation. Chapters 3 and 4 considered a number of influencing factors that can be classified in two broad categories: factors related to the *context* in which the policy implementation takes place; and those related to the *content* of the policy. Earlier, Figure 10.1 provided a schematic overview of the answer to this research question (and others).

Three contextual factors can be distinguished based on theoretical and empirical analyses. First, there is the professional context, relating to the professionalism of the implementing public professionals. As noted in Chapter 4, we expected an increasing degree of professionalism to negatively influence policy alienation. A first indicator of high professionalism is the existence of a strong professional association (Eraut, 1994). We showed that, the weaker the professional association, the greater the strategic powerlessness experienced by the implementing professionals. For example, the weak position of the professional associations of the insurance physicians, found in Chapter 4, contributed to the feeling of many physicians and labor experts that they were strategically powerless.

The status of the professional group can be considered as another indicator of professionalism. Our comparative study in Chapter 4 showed that the physicians proved more capable than the teachers of maintaining some discretion in their core tasks, and that their professional status proved an important factor in this. Professionals with a relatively low status (such as teachers) seemed to have greater difficulty in retaining discretion in their actions than higher status professions (such as physicians), and this leads to experiencing greater policy alienation.

Finally, we noted that the professional orientation of the individual implementers strongly influenced the policy alienation they experienced. Not all the professionals implementing a policy experience it in the same way. Here, the 'professional-policy fit' seems to influence the pressures experienced by individual professionals in a similar way to the better-known person-organization fit (Kristof, 1996). For instance, in the Second Phase model (Chapter 4), one could distinguish between two types of teachers (Van Veen, 2003:103). On the one hand, there were teachers who were 'student-oriented' and consider personal and moral development to be among the goals of education; on the other, there are 'content-oriented' teachers, who consider qualifications to more-or-less be the only goal of education. Looking at the two types of teachers, the constructivist orientation of the Second Phase model fitted better with the student-oriented teachers. As a result, they experienced the

Second Phase as more meaningful for their students (Kips, 2003:50-51; Van Veen, 2003:127). However, this constructivist approach involved students having to work more independently. In many schools, management framed this as a reduction in the number of hours teachers had to teach each class. Many content-oriented teachers experienced this situation as detrimental for the students (Kips, 2003:54; Nierop, 2004:24; Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008a:139). As such, the professional orientation of a teacher seemed to influence the degree of policy alienation they experienced.

Next to the professional context, the political context was also found to be an important factor in explaining the degree of policy alienation felt by public professionals. The political context could sometimes be characterized by a multitude of policy changes. For instance, in the case of insurance physicians implementing stricter rules for re-examining welfare clients (the ASB policy), there were a number of major policy changes in just a few years, such as the 'Gatekeeper Improvement Act', the ASB, and a new law on work and income (WIA). Having many changes seems to contribute to feelings of societal meaninglessness. The following quote from an interviewed physician illustrates this:

> *"Lately there have been so many changes: first the adjustments to the ASB, now the law regarding work and income. It happens all the time. I do not feel 'connected' with politicians. Often they propose things which are not well thought out, but which have to be implemented right away."*

Next to the number of policy changes, political aspects peculiar to a specific case were sometimes influential. In the case of the Second Phase, for instance, a steering committee was developed – headed by the Secretary of State – that did not contain any members of the professional associations. Further, the Minister of Education kept stressing the 'political primacy' of the policy design. In this way, the Secretary of State and the Minister of Education retained a strong influence over the development of the Second Phase, something which heightened the strategic powerlessness sensed by the teachers.

The third and last context factor we distinguished is the organizational context of the implementing professionals. Policy implementation by public professionals happens in and around organizations, and so the organizational context can potentially influence the way in which public professionals experience new policies. In this study, we first found that the extent of a hierarchical structure was important. For instance, in the Second Phase

implementation, we found that many teachers experienced a fairly egalitarian structure. As one interviewed teacher put it:

> *"I believe that the position of the teacher is very strong [in our school, LT]. When you are a school manager you know that it will not work if you coerce teachers to do something they do not believe in."*

Consequently, in many schools, teachers were in a strong position to influence the way in which the Second Phase was actually concretized in their schools. However, in some schools, managers were the dominant party and Prick (2006:119) states that, in these schools, "school management dictates how the Study House has to be modeled". We saw that this resulted in teachers experiencing a higher degree of tactical powerlessness. In this way, the degree of hierarchy influences the level of policy alienation.

Further, in organizations demonstrating a number of NPM characteristics, the degree of policy alienation experienced by the professionals could be heightened. Strict performance criteria (NPM doctrine 2 as classified by Hood, 1991) and a managerial focus on output controls (doctrine 3) were influential on the degree of policy alienation experienced, especially in the ASB study. Here, the UWV had to implement the ASB and, in a short period, more than 325,000 people had to be re-examined. To achieve this, the UWV focused primarily on the number of re-examinations completed, thereby instigating strict performance criteria with a focus on results. The physicians and labor experts, on the other hand, often wanted to retain their professional norms. As one physician put it, "there is clearly a culture of repression. Management does not understand that physicians need time. Tensions arise when physicians want to work accurately and managers tell them that they have to do fifteen re-examinations a week." This feeling was, however, not universal: some respondents stated that they could cope effectively by communicating with their manager.

The final organizational context factor considered was the way in which ICT was used, an aspect which, in our study, had most relevance for the labor experts. For more than ten years, the labor experts had been using a database, containing more than 7,000 job descriptions, to distil possible job profiles. A new system was introduced in 2001, which was intentionally both less automating and more informing (Van der Hart & Moekoet, 2003). This was expected to increase the discretion of the labor experts but, with the ASB implementation, the opposite occurred. Managers, who were experiencing increased pressure to produce results, used the ICT system to limit the

discretion of the labor experts. The following quotation, looking at the interaction between the managerial NPM practices (Components 2 and 3) and the ICT system, illustrates this (cited in LVA, 2006:5):

> *"The new system is subjective. The labor expert has more freedom to choose. There is more room for interpretation. This can go two ways. Pressure was increased by management to find more, and better paid, jobs suitable for the client and consequently to lower their disability percentage. This was the reason I came into conflict with the organization."*

To summarize, the professional, political, and organizational contexts in which the policy implementation took place influenced the degree of policy alienation felt by the public professionals studied. Next to these contextual factors, factors related to the policy itself clearly also influenced the degree of policy alienation.

First, the type of policy goal influenced the policy alienation felt by the public professionals, most notably in terms of societal meaninglessness. Goals focusing on efficiency seemed to heighten societal meaninglessness, whereas quality-based goals were perceived in a more positive light. For instance, in the ASB case, the cost-reduction goal seemed to be perceived as the dominant reason for its introduction. As one physician put it: "I see it more as a cost savings policy than a method to get people into work" (WAOcafé, 2006a). If this is the reality, then NPM-based considerations would seem likely to dominate in the trade-off of values in the ASB implementation, leading to a shift in the value orientation: in a direction not welcomed by most of the physicians and labor experts involved (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; WAOcafé, 2006a). This can be seen as a concretization of the seventh doctrine of NPM: a greater discipline in resource use (Hood, 1991). Unlike the physicians and labor experts, many teachers did experience *low* societal meaninglessness in their new policy. The official objectives of the Second Phase are (a) to increase the quality of education in secondary schools and (b) to improve the connection with higher education (Advisory Body on Second Phase, 2005:12). Naturally, almost all teachers saw these as laudable goals and Kips (2003:49) states that only 10% disagreed with the goals of the policy. In this way, we see that the goal of a policy influences the policy alienation felt, and more specifically the degree of societal meaninglessness.

Alongside the policy goals, the actual content of a policy also influenced the degree of policy alienation. Most importantly, the rigidity of the rules influenced policy alienation. In the case of the ASB, the new rules were more rigid in two ways. First, in the sense that people were less often classified as

work disabled. An interviewed board member of a professional association of labor experts expressed their general reaction:

> *"A very large number of labor experts did not agree with this policy. They say, this is too strict, too rigid. I agree with this. First people were fully work disabled; now they are fully able to work. Only because the government changed the rules."*

This effect resulted in a high degree of societal and client meaninglessness for both physicians and labor experts. Second, the rules were stricter in the sense that they left less room to deviate from the official program, heightening the sense of operational powerlessness (reduced discretion) for both physicians and labor experts. A survey by De Boer and Steenbeek (2005) notes that, in general, physicians experienced a somewhat lower level of discretion after this policy was introduced. Likewise, Kammer and Jorritsma (2005:3) state: "physicians had the feeling that they had less influence on their job and could use their own professional standards less". Many interviewed teachers also stated that their discretion had decreased, in part due to the rules in the Second Phase. Kips (2003:54) notes that 75% of the teachers affected by the Second Phase agreed with the statement: "With the introduction of the Second Phase, it became more difficult to deviate from the official program".

Our second research question (RQ2) was "What are the main factors that influence policy alienation?". As described above, we have identified two main factors influencing the degree of policy alienation: the context in which the policy implementation takes place; and the content of the policy itself. In examining the *context*, we determined that the professional context (i.e. professional association, status of the profession, professional orientation of the implementer), the political context (number of policy changes, general political context), and the organizational context (degree of hierarchy, NPM-characteristics, ICT-use) were all influential. In terms of the influence of the policy *content*, we identified the type of policy goal (efficiency goals against quality goals) and the rules and regulations of the policy (strictness of rules) as influential on the degree of policy alienation felt by many of the professionals in our surveys.

10.2.3 Policy alienation can be measured using a 26-item measurement instrument (RQ 3)

The third research question considers the way in which policy alienation can be measured. Chapter 5 dealt with this research question extensively, using the case of the implementation of Diagnosis Related Groups in Dutch mental healthcare by psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and psychologists. To be able to

measure the identified five sub-dimensions of policy alienation, scale development techniques as described by DeVellis (2003; see also Hinkin, 1998) were followed. In this concluding chapter, we summarize this process by reviewing the four main scale-development steps.

Firstly, for each sub-dimension of policy alienation, ten items were generated. The items were formatted using five-point Likert scales, with allowable responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. We used templates in constructing these items. Templates allow the researcher to more accurately specify an item by replacing general phrases with more specific ones that better fit the research context. For example, instead of stating 'the policy' or 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items using the specific policy and the group of professionals which are being surveyed. In the mental healthcare case study, 'the DRG policy' and 'mental healthcare professionals' replaced the template terms. It has been shown that this makes it easier for professionals to understand items, as they are better tailored to their context, and this, in turn, increases reliability and content validity (DeVellis, 2003:62).

Secondly, to further increase content validity, twenty-one experts examined the initial pool of potential items. These experts were selected for their variety of expertise (DeVellis, 2003:75), here ranging from quantitative methodologists to mental healthcare specialists. These experts were interviewed sequentially and, after each expert discussion, we added or discarded items based on comments received. At the end of this process, we ended with what we considered to be the six most appropriate items for each dimension. Harvey et al. (1985 in Hinkin, 1998) recommend having at least four items for each scale so that one could test the homogeneity of the items within each latent construct. By retaining six items, we kept open the option of deleting some less suitable items in later stages of the scale development process.

Thirdly, we used the items developed in the second step in our survey of 478 mental healthcare professionals. After conducting the survey, we used principle components analysis with oblique rotation to identify groups of items. Based on this analysis, we then chose the best-fitting items for each dimension of policy alienation.

Fourthly, we conducted tests to establish the construct validity of the policy alienation scales. Construct validity is "the extent to which a measure 'behaves' the way that the construct it purports to measure should behave with regard to established measures of other constructs" (DeVellis, 2003:53). These validity tests showed that policy alienation behaved as expected from theory: it correlated significantly and in the expected direction with measures to which it was theoretically related, such as change willingness (r=-.59, p<.01). Further, policy alienation did not correlate with those measures it was not expected to

strongly correlate with, such as gender (-.05, n.s.), the number of people working in the institution (.06, n.s.), and working as a freelance as against for an organization (.01, n.s.). Given the satisfactory construct validity tests, we can be reasonably confident that our measurement method really is measuring policy alienation.

Based on these scale-development steps, we constructed a policy alienation measurement instrument containing 23 items. In a second survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals, we again used this developed scale, with satisfactory outcomes. Nevertheless, for the strategic powerlessness scale, we elected to construct some additional items, as the scale with only three items was rather compact. This change is consistent with the recommendations of Hinkin (1998) and with our own arguments in Chapter 5, which view having only three items for a latent construct as somewhat low. We concluded that it was safe to retain the new items based on (a) exploratory factor analysis and (b) reliability analysis (i.e. a satisfactory Cronbach alpha). The three newly constructed items were added to the strategic powerlessness scale (items 4-6 in Table 10.1). This resulted in an increased Cronbach alpha of .85, compared to .74 in the first study.

Finally, this 26-item measurement instrument was retested with another policy in a different context, through a case study of Dutch midwives implementing the twenty-week ultrasound policy (SEO). Based on the analyses of a survey of 790 midwives, we found that the 26-item measurement instrument for policy alienation was satisfactory. First, we had expected that the midwives would perceive far less policy alienation than the mental healthcare professionals. We anticipated this difference based on document analysis, where we observed that many mental healthcare professionals had difficulty identifying with the DRG policy (Mengelberg & Velthuys, 2007; Palm et al., 2008), but that, in general, midwives were quite positive about the SEO policy (Koelewijn, 4-12-2003, Own interviews, 2011). We indeed found that the degree of policy alienation experienced by Dutch midwives implementing the SEO policy was much lower than for mental healthcare professionals implementing the DRG policy. The average level of policy alienation was 5.1 (on a scale of 1 to 10) for midwives, and 7.4 for mental healthcare professionals. Related to this, the degree of powerlessness (5.6 for midwives, 6.9 for mental healthcare professionals) and especially meaninglessness (4.6 against 7.9) differed notably between the two groups. This consistency in findings adds weight to the validity claimed of the policy alienation scale.

Further, we found that the Cronbach alphas were generally adequate. With the midwives, these were: .83 for strategic powerlessness (as against the earlier .74 for DRG survey 1 and .85 for DRG survey 2), .88 for tactical

powerlessness (.86/.87 in the DRG surveys), .63 for operational powerlessness (.82/.83 in DRG surveys), .85 for societal meaninglessness (.95/.96 in DRG surveys) and .84 for client meaninglessness (.91/.80 for the DRG surveys). Hence, all but one of the Cronbach alphas were either good or excellent in the midwives study, the exception being operational powerlessness which was merely adequate. Furthermore, construct validity tests showed that policy alienation behaved as expected in the midwives case study. It correlated significantly and in the expected direction with measures to which it is theoretically related, such as change willingness (r=-.34, p<.01) and behavioral support for the policy (r=-.38, p<.01). These analyses show that the proposed policy alienation measurement works adequately in a different context. However, its validation in other contexts and countries would be beneficial (see Section 10.4). To sum up, based on theoretical and empirical analyses, a policy alienation scale was developed consisting of 26 items, as shown in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1 Items on the policy alienation measurement instrument

Policy alienation measurement instrument
Strategic powerlessness
1. In my opinion, <u>professionals</u> had too little power to influence the <u>policy</u>
2. We <u>professionals</u> were completely powerless during the introduction of the <u>policy</u>
3. <u>Professionals</u> could not at all influence the development of the <u>policy</u> at the national level (Minister and Ministry of <u>X</u>, National Government)
4. On a national level, <u>professionals</u> could influence how the <u>policy</u> was set up (R)
5. <u>Professionals</u>, through their professional associations, actively helped in drawing up the design of the <u>policy</u> (R)
6. Politicians, during the design of the policy, did not listen to the <u>professionals</u> at all
Tactical powerlessness
7. In my <u>organization</u>, especially <u>professionals</u> could decide how the <u>policy</u> was being implemented (R)
8. In my <u>organization</u>, <u>professionals</u> have - through working groups or meetings - taken part in decisions on executing the <u>policy</u> (R)
9. The management of my <u>organization</u> should have involved the <u>professionals</u> far more in the execution of the <u>policy</u>
10. <u>Professionals</u> were not listened to over the introduction of the <u>policy</u> in my <u>organization</u>
11. In my <u>organization,</u> <u>professionals</u> could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the <u>policy</u> (R)
12. I and my fellow <u>professionals</u> were completely powerless in the introduction of the <u>policy</u> in my <u>organization</u>
Operational powerlessness
13. I have freedom to decide how to use the <u>policy</u> (R)
14. While working with <u>the policy</u>, I can be in keeping with the <u>client's</u> needs (R)
15. Working with the <u>policy</u> feels like a harness in which I cannot easily move
16. When I work with the <u>policy</u>, I have to adhere to tight procedures
17. While working with the <u>policy</u>, I cannot sufficiently tailor it to the needs of my <u>clients</u>
18. While working with the <u>policy</u>, I can make my own judgments (R)
Societal meaninglessness
19. I think that the <u>policy</u>, in the long term, will lead to <u>goal 1</u> (R)
20. I think that the policy, in the short term, will lead to goal 1 (R)
21. I think that the <u>policy</u> has already led to <u>goal 1</u>(R)
22. Overall, I think that the <u>policy</u> leads to <u>goal 1</u> (R)
Client meaninglessness
23. With the <u>policy</u> I can better solve the problems of my <u>clients</u> (R)
24. The <u>policy</u> is contributing to the welfare of my <u>clients</u> (R)
25. Because of the <u>policy</u>, I can help <u>clients</u> more efficiently than before (R)
26. I think that the <u>policy</u> is ultimately favorable for my <u>clients</u> (R)
Template words are underlined. These words can be replaced with more specific ones that better fit the research context. For example, instead of stating 'the policy' or 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items using the specific policy and group of professionals which are being examined, such as 'the DRG policy' and 'mental healthcare professionals'.

10.2.4 Policy alienation affects willingness to implement policies, behavioral support for the policy and job satisfaction (RQ 4)

The final research question considers the effects of policy alienation. In this study, we looked at three important outcomes: willingness to implement public policies, behavioral support for the policy, and job satisfaction.

The influence of policy alienation on willingness to implement public policies has been mainly discussed in Chapter 6. Throughout change management history, it is has been fairly consistently claimed that a crucial condition for success is that employees are willing to implement the change (Carnall, 2007; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Judson, 1991). According to planned change theories, an absence of willingness will result in top management's intentions to instill a change not being transformed into real change efforts by lower echelons (Judson, 1991). According to the emergent school, unwillingness would impede the process of continuous modifications, which would no longer accumulate and amplify (Weick, 2000). Metselaar (1997:42) defines change willingness as "a positive behavioral intention towards the implementation of modifications in an organization's structure, or work and administrative processes, resulting in efforts from the organization member's side to support or enhance the change process". In this study, we used the scale developed by Metselaar (1997) to measure change willingness (here, in terms of implementing a new public policy) as this had the advantages that it had been validated and uses templates in which one can specify the change being assessed.

Based on literature from the change management and public administration streams, a theoretical model was constructed linking five dimensions of policy alienation to change willingness. This model was tested in a survey of 478 mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. The model worked adequately in that the policy alienation dimensions, together with conventional control variables, explained over 40% of the variance in change willingness.

More specifically, we found that three sub-dimensions of policy alienation influenced willingness to implement policies. Operational powerlessness was significant. The more that mental healthcare professionals felt they had little autonomy when implementing the DRG policy (i.e. high operational powerlessness), the less supportive they were toward the policy. Strategic and tactical powerlessness were however insignificant in determining willingness. In fact, the most important factor in explaining willingness to implement policies turned out to be societal meaninglessness: the perception of professionals concerning the added value of a policy to socially relevant goals. Professionals who felt that the policy did not contribute to the goals (such as efficiency and transparency) were far less willing to implement the policy.

Further, professionals who felt that the DRG policy was not contributing to the welfare of their own clients, had relatively low levels of willingness to implement.

In Chapter 9, we analyzed the relationship between policy alienation and willingness to implement policies in a different situation, that of midwives implementing the twenty-week ultrasound policy. Using a survey of 790 midwives, we again found that the policy alienation dimensions were significant in explaining the degree of implementation willingness, although the explained variation was somewhat lower. Further, we again found that the meaninglessness dimension was more important than the powerlessness dimension (β=-.16, p<.01 for powerlessness, against β=-.26, p<.01 for meaninglessness).

Hence, we conclude that a potentially important effect of policy alienation is that it could strongly influence the willingness to implement public policies. Related to this, we also studied *behavioral* support for a policy, using the case study on midwives implementing the ultrasound (SEO) policy. Behavioral support for a change (in this case, a policy) reflects the actions that employees take to support or resist a change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). For instance, professionals may go above and beyond what is formally required to ensure the success of a policy and promote it to others. This is termed 'championing'. At the other end of the continuum, professionals can demonstrate strong opposition to a new policy by engaging in overt behaviors that are intended to ensure that the policy fails. Behavioral support for the policy is related to, but logically independent of, willingness to implement a policy. In measuring behavioral support for a policy, we examined the *behavior* of professionals, such as compliance with or championing a policy. Willingness to implement, on the other hand, examines the *intention to put effort* toward the implementation of a policy. While two professionals may be equally intent on putting effort into implementing a policy (same level of willingness to implement), one of them may be compliant (a medium level of behavioral support), while the other persuades colleagues to embrace the change (championing – a high level of behavioral support).

Our anticipation was that, as the degree of policy alienation increased, the willingness to implement a policy and the demonstrated behavioral support would both decrease. As expected, the policy alienation dimensions did have a strong influence on behavioral support for the policy. This reflects a situation in which midwives, if they feel that they have no influence in the shaping of the policy (powerlessness) or think the policy is not beneficial for society in general or for their own clients, will show resistant behavior toward the policy, perhaps by engaging in overt resistant behaviors such as demonstrations. As with the

willingness to implement the policy, we found that the experienced level of policy meaninglessness was more important for explaining behavioral support for the policy than the level of policy powerlessness.

By examining the influence of policy alienation on willingness to implement and on behavioral support for a policy, this study provides insights that can help in understanding why public professionals are sometimes reluctant to implement new policies.

Alongside this, we examined the influence of policy alienation on the job satisfaction of public professionals. This moves us from the policy level to the, more general, job level. We chose to focus on job satisfaction at this is an important work outcome and a strong predictor of work behaviors, such as organizational citizenship (Organ & Greene, 1981) and turnover (Saari & Judge, 2004).

Chapter 8 analyzed the relationship between policy powerlessness and job satisfaction. Insights from policy implementation literature and from organizational politics literature were combined to more fully explain the job satisfaction of public professionals. Based on these two literature streams, a theoretical model was constructed. This model was tested in a survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals implementing DRGs. The model worked adequately in that policy powerlessness dimensions and politicking, together with conventional control variables, explained 19% of the variance in job satisfaction, which is a reasonably high percentage given the number of possible influences on job satisfaction.

Operational powerlessness and tactical powerlessness significantly affected the job satisfaction of public professionals. That is, when professionals feel that they have no autonomy during the implementation of a policy, they will be less satisfied with their jobs. Furthermore, when they do not feel that they can influence the way in which their organization implements the policy, they will be less satisfied. Moreover, we found that the effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction is strongest among professionals working in a highly politicized environment. Influence is likely to reduce insecurity and increase control, by sharing power and information wherever possible, and this is especially important in a politically charged situation (Witt et al., 2000). This emphasizes the contextual nature of policy implementation by public professionals. In some organizations, it will be more valuable to engage professionals in discussing the way the organization implements policy than in others.

10.3 MAIN SIX CONCLUSIONS

We can now reflect on the main conclusions from this study. In this way, we can move beyond the answers to the main research questions and relate our results to literature and to practice.

In Chapter 1, we noted that this study followed an interdisciplinary approach and drew on different bodies of literature. Further, we discussed the possible theoretical, methodological, and practical value of this study, and in so doing focused on policy implementation literature and public administration/management literature (especially as it related to public professionals). In Chapters 2-9, the contributions of this study to the different bodies of literature have been discussed in more detail.

In the previous section, the four research questions were answered. Based on this, we will now assess six important conclusions. We will subsequently relate these to the appropriate bodies of literature. This is shown schematically in Table 10.2. In this way, we aim to demonstrate the interdisciplinary character of this research. The table also shows that the main contributions of this study lay in the literature public administration/public management and policy implementation streams, consistent with the perceived values of this study discussed in Chapter 1.

Table 10.2 Conclusions and their relation to the various bodies of literature (simplified)

#	Conclusion in short	Contribution to literature on:
1	NPM is influential, but a broader view is necessary	Public administration/management
2	Autonomy remains crucial for public professionals	Public administration/management, policy implementation, sociology of professions
3	Public professionals are not against business goals, but question the ways and means to achieve those goals	Public administration/management, change management
4	It is more beneficial to focus on enhancing meaningfulness, than on influence	Change management, policy implementation, HRM
5	Policy content, organizational context, and personality characteristics are influential	Policy implementation, change management, work and organizational psychology
6	The policy alienation framework is appropriate for the task	Public administration/management, policy implementation, work and organizational sociology

After discussing each conclusion and relating it to the appropriate literature, we will derive a number of recommendations for researchers and practitioners based on these results. In this way, we aim to explicitly connect theory with practice (see also Chapter 1).

10.3.1 Conclusion 1 – NPM is influential, but a broader view is necessary

This study started with the statement that New Public Management practices put pressure on public professionals in service delivery (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Bottery, 1998; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Freidson, 2001; Palm et al., 2008; Sehested, 2002; White, 1996). In line with this premise, we indeed found that NPM influences the degree of policy alienation experienced by public professionals. For example, the more that management concretizes a policy by focusing on performance measurement and output controls, the greater the degree of powerlessness and meaninglessness experienced. In this way, we provide further evidence that NPM-type performance management systems can have undesirable effects (P. Smith, 1995; Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002).

However, a number of caveats must be made. Firstly, we should note that NPM is a loose term, and no two authors include exactly the same features (Hood & Peters, 2004:268). This makes it difficult to assess whether a factor is really related to New Public Management. Furthermore, the characteristics of NPM can be inherently conflicting. Hood (1991) argued that the origins of NPM came from two very different streams of ideas. It was a 'marriage of opposites': between on the one hand new institutional economics (stressing public choice and principal-agent theory) and, on the other, business-type 'managerialism' (stressing performance measurement and high discretionary power to achieve results). The cohesiveness of such a marriage can be disputed: "'free to manage' is a rather different slogan from 'free to choose'. The two can conflict, particularly where the NPM revolution is led from above (as it was in the UK) rather than from below." (Hood, 1991:6).

Further, even if we do try to define NPM, for example by using the seven components put forward by Hood (1991), we see that there are factors influencing the degree of policy alienation that are not directly related to NPM, as is shown in Figure 10.1. For instance, we found that the status of the profession and the power of the professional association both influence the degree of policy alienation experienced. That is, NPM is not the only factor that puts pressure on professionals. Next, we observed that the NPM pressures are not universal. For instance, some physicians stated that they could effectively cope with the increased performance pressures by communicating with their manager whereas others struggled to cope. In this way, management can act as a buffer in enforcing the strict performance criteria (see also Noordegraaf, 2008). Concluding, although NPM is an important factor that does influence the experiences of public professionals with new policies, a broader view is necessary.

This conclusion has implications for both research and practice. For researchers, it seems to question the statement by some authors (for example Emery & Giauque, 2003; J. Peters & Pouw, 2005) that NPM is the major and sometimes the only factor that pressurizes professionals. Our empirical findings are more in line with other authors (for example Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Kirkpatrick, Ackroyd, & Walker, 2005; Leicht & Fennell, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007; Noordegraaf, 2008) who suggest there are larger forces at work, such as the emancipation of clients, the introduction of new technologies, the demands posed by politicians and policymakers, and the influence of the media. We can add a number of factors to this list including the political and professional contexts (see Figure 10.1). In examining the professional context, the strength of the professional association proved important. Looking into this, we saw that strong professional associations (such as those of medical specialists) often align with other stakeholders (such as healthcare managers or patients) to influence policymaking. Based on these findings, we recommend taking a broader view when examining pressured professionals.

For practitioners, such as politicians and policymakers, we also would recommend taking a broader view. That is, they should not only focus on the degree of NPM appropriate for professionals (see for example Palm et al., 2008; Zembla, 2007) for example. Rather, they should also consider the professional and political contexts in which implementation takes place, as well as the policy goals and the rules and regulations of the policy (see Figure 10.1). For instance, policymakers could opt to involve professional associations more intensively, or to loosen the rules in order to leave professionals some discretion in applying them on a case-by-case basis. Further, we found that introducing numerous policy changes increases the sense of policy alienation because professionals feel overwhelmed by the changes. This finding aligns with comments in the business administration literature on 'change fatigue' (Judson, 1991). We would advise policymakers and politicians to reduce the number of policy changes, a recommendation in line with suggestions already made concerning education reforms (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b). More generally, policymakers and managers could use aspects of this study (especially Chapters 3 and 4 and the answer to Research Question 2 in Section 10.2.2) when considering which opportunities are available to increase the commitment (or lower the alienation) of public professionals implementing policies, and so increase policy effectiveness.

10.3.2 Conclusion 2 – Autonomy remains critical for public professionals

The second conclusion reflects on the notion of autonomy; one of the defining characteristics of professional work (Eraut, 1994; Freidson, 2001). In our study,

we analyzed the operational powerlessness during policy implementation, an aspect which is often referred to as discretion when applied to street-level public servants (Hill & Hupe, 2009) or as autonomy during policy implementation (when addressing professionals) (Noordegraaf & Steijn, forthcoming 2012).

We found that operational powerlessness, or discretion, has a strong influence on both the willingness to implement new policies and the job satisfaction of public professionals. In Chapter 6, we showed that operational powerlessness significantly reduced this willingness to implement public policies. In a second empirical study, documented in Chapter 7, the same conclusion was reached. In that chapter, we included additional factors related to the organizational context and to the personality characteristics of the implementing professionals. According to the professionals surveyed, the extent of operational powerlessness was quite low, and this made it difficult for them to adjust treatment to the specific needs of a patient. As one professional argued (open answers from the survey, see Chapter 7):

> *"Patients receive a 'label' from a classification system [...]. Sometimes a patient fits into a 'depression' but really needs something more than a neat 'Cognitive Behavioral Therapy protocol of ten sessions'. If time and number of sessions rather than content start dominating, it becomes impossible to provide patient-centered care."*

Further, we showed in Chapter 8 that operational powerlessness has a strong negative influence on the job satisfaction of public professionals. As such, if professionals feel that they have no discretion when implementing a policy, they will be less willing to implement the policy *and* will be less satisfied with their jobs. Overall, in a number of our studies, we saw that the degree of discretion was quite low in implementing new policies, especially for the teachers and mental healthcare professionals. We showed that this is likely to have negative consequences.

This has implications for both scholars and practitioners. First, it adds support to statements in the current debate on pressured professionals, where claims are made by leading authors such as Freidson (2001) that the autonomy of professionals is diminishing (see also Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Harrison & Ahmad, 2000). Further, it seems that the concept of discretion remains crucial on the policy implementation level (Elmore, 1985; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Lipsky, 1980). A high level of discretion can enhance policy performance through increasing the willingness to implement by implementers who are given the room to adapt the policy to the situations of their clients: "attempts to control

them [implementers, LT] hierarchically simply increases their tendency to stereotype and disregard the needs of the clients" (Hill & Hupe, 2009:52, see also Lipsky, 1980).

However, there is also a potential pitfall if too much discretion is granted. If professionals do not agree with a policy, they can use discretion to shirk or sabotage (Brehm & Gates, 1999). In the present study, we found that discretion had a strong impact on the willingness to implement policies. Future studies could go deeper into the relationship between discretion, willingness to implement policies, *and* policy performance. For instance, one could explore the conditions under which a high level of discretion positively influences both willingness to implement new policies and policy performance, and under what conditions a high level of discretion stimulates willingness to implement new policies, but negatively influences performance.

For policymakers, this means that care should be taken when reducing the autonomy of the public professionals implementing the policy. We are not saying that policymakers should never reduce professional autonomy: autonomy can have substantial downsides, such as empire building and inefficiency (Deakin, 1994; Lipsky, 1980). Rather, we are warning that diminishing the autonomy of professionals should be a deliberate, informed choice, made after balancing the possible advantages and disadvantages. Further, the negative consequences in terms of the job satisfaction of public professionals should be a concern for both the individual employees and for the organization as a whole (Van de Voorde, 2009) since job satisfaction can influence organizational citizenship behavior (Organ & Greene, 1981), turnover (Saari & Judge, 2004), and job performance (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985). Thus, overall, a perceived reduction in autonomy can have severe effects on the individual, policy, and organizational levels.

10.3.3 Conclusion 3 – Public professionals are not against business goals, but question the ways and means to achieve those goals

The third conclusion of this study refers to the attitude of professionals towards business values, such as efficiency and client choice. In the first case study, involving insurance physicians and labor experts, it seemed that the public professionals did not agree with the business goal of efficiency (De Boer & Steenbeek, 2005; WAOcafé, 2006a). However, in the second case of the Diagnosis Related Groups, the healthcare professionals surveyed (in total over 1,700) did not on average oppose the business goals of this policy. Rather the opposite, they welcomed goals such as efficiency and increasing client choice (Tummers, 2011b). For example, the average score for the item 'In my opinion, enhancing the *efficiency* of mental healthcare is a goal very worthy of pursuing'

was an 8.1 (on a 1-10 scale). Further, the average score for the item 'In my opinion, enhancing the *transparency* of mental healthcare is a goal very worthy of pursuing' was a 7.8 (on a 1-10 scale). Moreover, when examining the open answers in our surveys, many professionals commented that they did agree with the business goals of the policy.

However, many professionals did not think that these goals were achieved through the DRG policy. Societal meaninglessness reflects whether a policy really adds to the societal goals it pursues. While the professionals did agree with the *goals* of the policy, they did not think that the *means* (the DRG policy) would achieve them. The average scores for agreeing with the goals and reaching those goals were very different. While the scores for agreeing with the goals of efficiency and transparency were quite high (8.1 and 7.8), the professionals did not think that those goals were achieved (3.4 and 3.6) (Tummers, 2011b). As one professional noted (in an open answer in our survey): "I wholeheartedly agree with the goals of the DRG policy. However, I cannot agree with the way these goals are executed by means of the DRG policy".

Based on our findings, it would be unwarranted to say that public professionals are inherently against business goals as such. This is an interesting observation as it contradicts other research in the field of public administration. Some New Public Management scholars argue that business goals, such as efficiency, are by definition not welcomed by professionals (Emery & Giauque, 2003; Van den Brink et al., 2006). On the contrary, we found that professionals were unwilling to implement a policy not because it focused on business goals, but because it would not achieve those business goals (i.e. the policy had a high societal meaninglessness).

This finding also has implications for change management literature. In a seminal Harvard Business Review article, John Kotter (1995) argued that a clear vision is very important if a transformation is to succeed. If there is no clear vision, many employees will resist change. However, he gave little attention to the importance of a sound *strategy* for realizing that vision. In policy terms, we argue that the vision corresponds to the policy *goals*, and the strategy to the policy itself (the *means* to achieve those goals). Based on the results of our study, we would advise change management scholars to make a clear distinction between the vision/goals of a change and the means/strategy of achieving that change.

Secondly, change management scholars should examine whether the means provided are sufficient for achieving the goals of a change. To do this requires examining the *content* of a change. For instance, the DRG policy was structured in a way that it gave rise to many perverse financial incentives, which would make it very difficult for the policy to achieve some of its goals, such as

efficiency. Nowadays, many change management scholars do not examine the contents of a change but focus primarily on the processes (such as communication, training) to reach that change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Holt, Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 2006). This proves to be insufficient for explaining the success of a change in some instances and we hope that future research on change management will therefore explicitly take the content of a change into account.

This conclusion also has implications for practitioners. First, for policymakers and for change agents implementing policies, it implies that business goals such as efficiency or increasing client choice can indeed be seen as a valuable goal for a new policy. As such, policymakers and change agents could more openly state that these are the goals being pursued and, further, they could include professionals in debates on how to achieve these goals. Next, practitioners should also enhance their understanding of the content of particular policies, and the associated behavior of implementing professionals. One way to achieve this would be to develop scenarios for the behavior of implementing professionals given the rules of the policy. Based on this, practitioners could set policy rules in advance that establish appropriate behavioral incentives for implementing professionals. Nowadays, this is often done ex-post, for instance one year after a policy has been in place.

10.3.4 Conclusion 4 – It is more beneficial to focus on enhancing meaningfulness, than on influence

This conclusion is related to the previous one. It highlights the significance of meaningful policies and meaningful work, and nuances the effect of employee influence on policy and work.

In both the change management and the general human resource management (HRM) literatures, there is a lot of emphasis on employee participation. Firstly, change management scholarly work and practice both argue that giving implementers influence is crucial for change willingness to be established (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). For instance, Judson (1991) argues that participation is the most powerful lever in gaining acceptance for a change.

In the HRM literature, the mechanism used to study power and influence can be traced back to the human relations movement (McGregor, 1960). One of the central tenets of this movement is that employees have a right to an input into decisions that affect their lives. Employees enjoy enacting decisions they have helped to create. Also, employees can achieve recognition when they are granted an opportunity to make decisions for themselves. This recognition is known to motivate and satisfy employees, making them less inclined to leave. As such, the human relations movement predicts that, when

employees experience powerlessness, this has negative consequences because intrinsic employee needs are not fulfilled.

In this study, we examined the impact of powerlessness and meaninglessness on both the policy level (based on the policy alienation concept) and on the work level (based on the work alienation concept). We found that, for all the outcome variables considered, the impact of societal and client meaninglessness was stronger than the impact of strategic and tactical powerlessness.

On the policy level, we found that the willingness to implement a policy and the behavioral support for a policy are more dependent on the level of policy meaninglessness experienced than on the extent of policy powerlessness. That is, for public professionals, it is more important to see the logic of a new policy than to have the feeling of being able to influence its shaping. Chapters 6, 7, and 9 all showed this: that meaninglessness was more important than powerlessness in explaining the willingness to implement a public policy. This was based on two cases (the DRG policy and the twenty-week ultrasound policy) and three independent large-scale surveys. Further, Chapter 9 also showed that the meaningless dimension was more important than the powerlessness dimension in explaining behavioral support for the policy.

We also analyzed the influence of policy alienation and work alienation on important work level indicators, such as intention to leave and work effort. We found that these work level indictors were related more strongly to work alienation than to policy alienation. This aligns with the statement of Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) in which they note that variables relate most strongly to one another when they are on the same level of specificity. As with our results on the policy level, we also found that, on the work level, the extent of work meaninglessness was more important than the level of work powerlessness. For instance, the work effort of professionals in the case of the twenty-week ultrasound policy was more strongly influenced by the level of experienced work meaninglessness (β=-.27, p<.01), than by work powerlessness (β=-.12, p<.01).

To sum up, for indicators on both the policy level (willingness to implement a policy, behavioral support for the policy) and indicators on the work level (intention to leave, work effort), it was more important that the professionals felt that they were doing something meaningful, than that they felt they had been able to influence its shaping on strategic or tactical levels. This conclusion has implications for scholars in HRM, public administration, and change management.

Many studies in HRM, policy implementation, and change management look at the degree of powerlessness, or influence, in general decision-making or during organizational changes (Bouma, 2009; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Jackson,

1983; Judson, 1991; Meyers & Vorsanger, 2003). Based on the results of our study, we can nuance this impact of employee influence on the strategic or tactical levels (although operational powerlessness, or autonomy, remains crucial, see conclusion 2). Rather, we would encourage scholars to give more attention to the *meaninglessness* dimension. A future research agenda could look on two levels. First, it could examine the meaninglessness of a specific subject, such as the meaninglessness of a specific policy or of an organizational change. Second, scholars could study the meaninglessness felt by professionals or other employees on the general, work, level. When studying meaninglessness, scholars could examine: (a) the level of meaninglessness felt, thereby comparing different groups (do managers feel that their work is less meaningful than professionals?); (b) the factors that influence the level of meaninglessness (personality characteristics, organizational setting, sector); and (c) the possible effects of this meaninglessness (organizational commitment, work-life enrichment).

For practitioners, a number of recommendations can be drawn up. In general, we urge practitioners, and scholars, to center their attention on the perceived meaninglessness of work or of a policy, alongside powerlessness aspects. For policymakers and managers, it seems that focusing on participation or powerlessness aspects alone will be ineffective. This conclusion has consequences given the recent discussions regarding involving professionals through shareholder partnerships, cooperatives, or public participation. Being offered participation if you feel that the policy rules and regulations are already set in stone does not appear to be offering much. If participation is to be practiced, it should be a *means* to enhance the meaningfulness of a policy, not a goal in itself. For example, policymakers and managers could arrange work sessions with professionals or professional associations to discuss a new policy before it is fully defined, enabling it to be adapted based on the outcomes of these discussions. In this way, participation can help to draft a better policy, which will enhance its meaningfulness.

There are also other ways to increase the perceived meaningfulness of a policy. One option would be to more intensively communicate the values associated with a policy, for example highlighting its urgency and the results already achieved. Further, pilots could be initiated before the 'rolling out' of a policy nationwide. These pilots could be used to improve the design of a policy, thereby increasing its perceived meaningfulness for society and clients.

On the work level, managers could think about ways to improve the perceived added value of the work that professionals carry out (see also the concept of Public Service Motivation, Perry (1996)). One way might be to more intensively communicate the results achieved by the work of the professionals.

Further, managers could try to reduce the division of labor such that the professionals cover more aspects and see more of the policy benefits (Kanungo, 1982). Finally, managers could introduce the idea of 'golden tickets'. Using these tickets, professionals would be able to switch positions with other members of the organization for a few days. In this way, they would be able to better understand the position of their work in the overall organization, thereby reducing its meaninglessness.

10.3.5 Conclusion 5 – Policy content, organizational context, and personality characteristics are influential

The fifth conclusion comes from examining three groups of factors that were found to influence the willingness to implement public policies. Based on literature from public administration, change management, and applied psychology fields, a theoretical model was constructed linking three groups of factors (policy content, organizational context, and personality characteristics) to willingness to implement a new policy. Four out of the five potential policy alienation sub-dimensions were included. Strategic powerlessness was excluded, as it proved insignificant during the statistical analyses, and had also been found so in previous studies. Tactical powerlessness was positioned under organizational context, while operational powerlessness, societal meaningless, and client meaninglessness were grouped under 'policy content and discretion'. Firstly, the results show that these four dimensions of policy alienation were influential, even after including other factors. More specifically, we found that societal meaninglessness, client meaninglessness, and discretion (operational powerlessness) were the most important aspects, a finding in line with conclusions 2 and 4.

Three groups of factors – policy content, organizational context, and personality characteristics – were all important in explaining the willingness of professionals to implement public policies. In other words, factors other than policy alienation influence the willingness to implement a policy, although the policy alienation variables are the most dominant. For instance, we found that the personality characteristics of the implementers did, to some extent, explain why psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists resisted the DRG policy. It seemed that the more rebellious mental health professionals were less willing to implement DRGs, while professionals who scored highly on rule compliance were more willing, even after all the other factors had been controlled for. That is, the latter are more inclined to follow rules, and therefore more willing to implement such a policy, even if they do not, for instance, see it as meaningful for their clients. These findings reflect the complex and multidimensional

character of policy implementation, and the impact of this on people's attitudes toward it.

In general, this conclusion means that, in order to increase the understanding of public policy implementation, scholars should include multiple factors in trying to explain the willingness, or lack thereof, of public professionals to implement policies. In our study, an interdisciplinary approach proved adequate. We empirically showed that various groups of factors, reflecting different disciplines, did indeed contribute to explaining the willingness of professionals to implement public policies. Future research could further this by drawing on works from, among others, organization studies, public administration, sociology of work and organization, and the psychology of work and organization. This would add to the overall understanding of the attitudes of professionals toward governmental policies. Elaborating on this, Herold et al. (2007:950) commented:

> "We need to develop a greater understanding of the complexities of reactions to a particular change [such as a new policy, LT]. Such reactions are a function not only of what is done and how it is done but also of the context in which it is done and the interaction of individuals' characteristics with that context. Embracing and further researching such complex change frameworks should prove to be a timely and productive endeavor for both researchers and practitioners."

For practitioners, this conclusion means that many factors are in play for explaining the willingness of professionals to implement public policies. The most important factors are related to the policy itself: operational powerlessness, plus societal and client meaninglessness. This means that practitioners should first and foremost analyze which aspects of a policy influence the willingness or resistance of professionals (see also conclusion 3). Second, they should look at the organizational context in which professionals work. In particular, the 'subjective norm towards a policy' within an organization is an influential factor in explaining the extent of the willingness of public professionals to implement new policies. This is known more commonly as 'peer pressure' (Burkhardt, 1994). A negative subjective norm decreases the willingness of these professionals to implement a new policy. Here, we note that some of the resistance among professionals to new policies is not rooted in the content of the policy - to 'real' pressures from outside - but has more to do with the negatives attitudes prevalent in their environment - to a 'negative discourse' being created. Policymakers can develop interventions to counter the resistance

of public professionals, for example by trying to convince influential professionals who are very negative concerning a policy of its value, and so turning them into proponents. This could be achieved by making them part of the organization's policy design team. Lastly, policymakers and managers should not overemphasize the role of personality characteristics. These characteristics are influential, but only to a very limited extent, adding only 2% to the explained variance (see Chapter 7). Hence, it seems that resistance is not rooted in someone's personal characteristics. This is good news for policymakers, managers and change agents who want to gain acceptance for a new policy since personal characteristics are not easy to change.

10.3.6 Conclusion 6 – The policy alienation framework is appropriate for the task

Our final and central conclusion concerns the policy alienation framework. In Chapter 2, we concentrated on the historical development of the alienation concept. The concept of alienation as we discussed has a long and expansive history. By drawing on the works of Marx, Hegel, Fromm, Merton and Weber among others, we were able to outline this history, providing a theoretical underpinning for the policy alienation concept. In Chapter 3, we discussed some more contemporary works on alienation and combined this stream with public administration literature so as to be able to conceptualize the policy alienation of public professionals. After conceptualizing the policy framework, its applicability was tested in an exploratory study involving insurance physicians and labor experts, where it proved to be valuable in explaining the problems experienced by public professionals when implementing a policy (Chapter 3). Later, it again proved helpful in understanding the differences and similarities between insurance physicians implementing a new policy on re-examining welfare clients and secondary school teachers implementing a new policy called 'The Second Phase' (Chapter 4). From these two studies, a number of important factors that influence policy alienation were identified.

From this point on, our aim was to strengthen the methodological basis of the policy alienation framework using scale development techniques (DeVellis, 2003; Hinkin, 1998). In Chapter 5, we used standard methodological considerations such as reliability and validity types (face validity, content validity, and construct validity) in evaluating potential measures. Based on this scale development, some additional strengthening of the scale (in Chapter 7) and testing of the scale in a different context with a policy that was positively received (Chapter 9), a 26-item policy alienation measurement instrument was constructed.

The developed policy alienation scale was then used to consider possibly important effects of policy alienation. On the policy level, we studied its effects

on willingness to implement public policies and on behavioral support for such a policy. It was first shown that dimensions of policy alienation strongly affected the willingness of professionals to implement public policies (Chapters 6, 7, and 9), their behavioral support for the policy (Chapter 9), and their job satisfaction (Chapter 8).

Further, we showed that policy alienation was indeed different from work alienation. In Chapter 3, we had argued that the policy alienation and work alienation concepts were different. Most critically, we argued that policy alienation examines alienation from the policy being implemented, as against from the job being done (i.e. work alienation). In Chapter 9, we empirically showed that policy alienation and work alienation were indeed different concepts.

In general, we can conclude that the policy alienation framework worked adequately, based on several theoretical, methodological, and practical arguments. Additional research would be beneficial in exploring this framework further, and in other ways. This is the focus of the next section.

10.4 A future research agenda for policy alienation

The conclusions of this study provide ideas for new research. These are structured below into theoretical, methodological, and practical research suggestions.

10.4.1 Theoretical – Relating policy alienation to important concepts

A first area for future research is the relationship between policy alienation and important concepts in the field of public administration, such as professional identification and public service motivation. Further, researchers could analyze the relationships between policy alienation, policy behavior of professionals, and policy performance.

Professional identification can broadly be defined as the 'professional employees' sense of oneness with their profession' (Hekman, Bigley, Steensma, & Hereford, 2009:510). For instance, when, in the media, medical specialists were criticized for their income increasing substantially (as was the case in the Netherlands), a medical specialist who feels strongly affected by this negative media attention can be said to have a high professional identification. Professional identification can have powerful effects on how employees interpret and react to organizational and political actions (Pratt & Foreman, 2000). We can imagine that this would also affect the degree of policy alienation. For instance, when a policy is drafted by politicians and policymakers, and not by a professional association, we would expect employees

with a high professional identification to perceive a higher degree of policy meaninglessness, irrespective of the policy content, than would employees with a low professional identification. Conversely, when a professional association has designed a policy, those with a strong professional identification would perhaps be inherently more positive than those with a weaker professional identification, irrespective of the policy content. Research on this topic seems particularly relevant given the contemporary pressures on professionals and professionalism. As a result of these pressures, the content of work and the context in which it takes place is changing, and this can affect and constrain professional work (Noordegraaf, 2007), and maybe this also affects the professional identity. Therefore, it seems useful to theoretically and empirically establish a link between the concept of professional identification, on the one hand, and policy alienation on the other.

Another concept that is possibly related to policy alienation is public service motivation (PSM). Perry (1996) identified four dimensions of PSM: attraction to policymaking and politics, commitment to the public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Commitment to the public interest is closely related to societal meaninglessness as it concerns the degree to which a person feels that they should contribute to the community. Compassion seems closely related to client meaninglessness. Compassion focuses on being considerate to other – sometimes less privileged – people. As such, it is conceivable that these two PSM dimensions could moderate the relationship between meaninglessness and willingness to implement. For example, if professionals feel that a policy does not contribute to society (a high societal meaninglessness) while they have a high commitment to serving this public interest, they might be less willing to implement such a policy. However, if they do not have a strong commitment to serving the public interest, this relationship might not hold. Then, other factors may be more influential in explaining their willingness to implement. These interactions between PSM and policy alienation could be a worthwhile topic for public administration scholars to address.

Thirdly, researchers could analyze the relationship between policy alienation and the policy behavior of professionals. In the current study, we examined the willingness to implement public policies as a possibly important effect of policy alienation. The willingness to implement a policy concept is derived from the works of Ajzen and Fishbein, and of Metselaar (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Ajzen, 1991; Metselaar, 1997) and addresses the intention of a professional to put effort into the successful implementation of a policy. However, an intention to act may not always lead to the predicted behaviors (Fazio, 1986). We did show that policy alienation has a negative influence on behavioral support for that policy, albeit that behavioral support was measured

in our study using self-reported surveys (see also Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). It would be interesting to investigate the effect of policy alienation on *actual* policy behavior: what do professionals really do when implementing public policies? A multimethod approach could be fruitful here. Researchers could use interviews or survey techniques to determine the professionals' level of policy alienation. Through observational techniques, researchers could then examine the actual behavior of these professionals when implementing the policy. This observed policy behavior could then be related to the level of policy alienation. Here, researchers could also assess the consequences of this policy behavior for overall policy performance. Alongside being of theoretical interest, this could also be very relevant for policymakers who need knowledge on the factors that affect policy performance. Furthermore, it fits within an interesting new direction for public administration research, where a shift is being witnessed from a focus on structures, through processes, to a focus on the *behavior* of public sector employees and their influence on policy effectiveness and organizational performance (Bekkers, 2007).

Related to this, another possibly fruitful direction for future research would be to study the relationships between policy alienation, policy behavior, and 'policy salience'. In Chapter 1, we noted that one of the four criteria in our case selection was that the public professionals should have opinions regarding the policy. This meant that a policy should substantially influence, in positive, negative, or other ways, the public professional. This is closely related with the concept of 'policy salience', which reflects the importance of a specific policy (Kuklinski & McCrone, 1980), here as perceived by the implementing public professionals. Torenvlied analyzed the importance of policy salience on the agency level. He showed that it is important for explaining the policy behavior of agencies. Even when agencies are heavily monitored and sanctioned, they could be better off by deviating from a policy if its salience was sufficiently large (Torenvlied, 1996:254). It would be interesting to study this on a personal level. If professionals have strong opinions regarding a specific policy, what are the effects? For instance, does it strengthen or weaken the relationship between policy alienation and policy behavior?

Further, researchers could study the important role of autonomy, or discretion, during policy implementation. We observed that discretion positively influences both the willingness to implement new policies and the job satisfaction of public professionals. However, how does discretion influence policy performance? On the one hand, high discretion might enhance policy performance by increasing willingness to implement, with implementers being given the opportunity to adapt the policy to the situations of their clients. In this way, they would be able to make appropriate trade-offs between values to reflect

specific circumstances (Lipsky, 1980). Related to this, Stoopendaal analyzed the notion of 'distance' between managers and professionals in healthcare. She noted that, when there is some distance between managers and professionals, managers are able to be in contact with different worlds, such as policymakers. She (2008:239) argues that: "Health care executives are at the same time close and distant, involved and detached. 'Being an outsider' is the executive's strength. Thanks to his familiarity and unfamiliarity the health care executive is able to join and open up different worlds towards each other." In this sense, a certain degree of distance (achieved through discretion) might be beneficial in terms of policy performance.

On the other hand, having a high discretion can also have perverse effects. If professionals do not agree with a policy, or have their own policy preferences, they can use this high discretion to shirk or to sabotage (Brehm & Gates, 1999). Further, it can also result in empire building and protectionism regarding professional status (Duyvendak et al., 2006). Hence, discretion can also be the cause of substantial problems in effecting policy processes. Future studies could usefully go deeper into the relationship between discretion and policy performance. For instance, one could explore the conditions under which a high level of discretion positively influences policy performance, and under which conditions a high level of discretion negatively influences performance. Based on this, normative implications could be deduced. Should policymakers provide considerable discretion to implementers? How does the political situation, the professional context, and the policy content influence these kinds of decisions?

10.4.2 Methodological – Confirming the policy alienation measurement

The second suggestion for future research addresses methodological issues. In this study, we constructed a policy alienation scale using exploratory factor analysis. In the early stages of developing scales, exploratory factor analysis is favored over methods which test hypothesized groups, such as confirmatory factor analysis (Field, 2005). The primary goal of confirmatory factor analysis is to confirm the ability of a predefined group of factors to model an observed set of data. Here, therefore, a confirmatory factor analysis could be used to validate the proposed scale structure.

Follow-up studies focusing on scale development should ideally be conducted in contexts dissimilar from the cases examined. In this study, we analyzed four cases: The experiences of:

1. Insurance physicians and labor experts with the ASB policy in Dutch social security

2. Teachers with the Second Phase model in Dutch higher secondary education
3. Psychotherapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists with DRGs in Dutch mental healthcare
4. Midwives with the twenty-week ultrasound policy in Dutch healthcare

In terms of the contexts covered, the first observation is that all four cases were situated in the Netherlands. Further, in the first three cases, the degree of policy alienation was rather high. However, in the fourth, the midwives were rather positive about the ultrasound policy. A direction for further research would be to test the proposed model with other types of policies in a wider range of public domains. Here, a comparative approach might work successfully, examining different kinds of policies in various countries and policy sectors. It could be that some elements of the policy alienation framework are better tailored to some sectors (such as healthcare and education) than to other sectors (such as defense). Further, it is also possible that there are differences between countries, and that the policy alienation framework would require adaptation to be useful for analyzing policies in certain countries. Additionally, one could study how the framework could be adapted for application with public sector employees other than the professionals we have considered, such as policymakers, policy advisors and public managers. In this way, the policy alienation concept has the potential to help understand how different groups of public sector employees experience governmental policies.

10.4.3 Practical – Examining how the policy alienation model can be applied in practice

In Chapter 1, we discussed the gaps between research and practice in public administration, and more specifically in the area policy implementation. The final suggestion for future research addresses how the policy alienation model could be applied in practice. This study has conceptualized and then produced and tested a measure for policy alienation. Further, we derived a number of recommendations for practitioners based on insights from empirical case studies, as discussed in the preceding section. Moreover, in Appendix 1, we explain five steps that can be followed in applying the policy alienation framework in future research and practice. In this way, we have attempted to partly bridge the gap between theory and practice concerning issues relating to the experiences of professionals with policies they have to implement.

Future research could contribute further to this endeavor by applying the policy alienation framework in practice, and analyzing how, when, and in which ways this can best be done. A relevant question is when is the best time to use the policy alienation framework to study the experiences of public

professionals in a given context (for instance at the beginning, at the end, or multiple times in a longitudinal study)? Further, how can practice make best use of the insights gained from applying the policy alienation framework? Here, one possibility would be to develop interventions aiming to change the attitudes and behavior of the public professionals. Another possibility is that the information derived from the policy alienation framework could be used to identify and change problematic characteristics of the policy. Action researchers and practitioners could study such questions, and derive both theoretical and practical implications based on these insights. This would make the policy alienation framework more meaningful for practitioners, and could ultimately improve public service delivery.

10.5   Concluding the conclusions

We started this study with the notion that, in the contemporary public sector, business-like values seem to have become very important. This is not only due to the financial crisis that started with the credit crunch in the summer of 2007. Already from the 1980s on, neoliberalism and the accompanying New Public Management movement led to a strengthening of a focus on businesslike values such as efficiency and transparency (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 1993). For example, neoliberal ideas were entering the healthcare sector in the United Kingdom early on (Davies, 2006:138):

> *"Neo-liberal ideas were advanced with great tenacity throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. [...] Performance systems that managed the sector from the center were implemented early on. New-style general managers with a vocabulary of business principles and business planning were introduced."*

In the Netherlands, similar developments can be witnessed. For example, in Dutch physical and mental healthcare, a system of regulated competition has been being implemented for a number of years, in which the focus is on values such as efficiency, transparency, and increasing client choice (Helderman et al., 2005; Smullen, forthcoming 2012). Further, in the Dutch social security system, cost control is becoming increasingly important, which can be witnessed in the recent downsizing of the Dutch Institute for Employees' Insurance (UWV), a semi-autonomous agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2011).

In order to achieve these businesslike goals, new public policies are being developed. Public policies can be seen as referring to the binding

allocation of values, for society as a whole, in a situation of structural scarcity (Easton, 1965). Public professionals on the frontline, such as physicians, psychotherapists, teachers, and police officers, are tasked with implementing these policies. However, it seems that many such public professionals have had difficulty identifying with these kinds of policies (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001). In this study, we have analyzed these problems of identification by building a theoretical framework on policy alienation.

In the coming years, politicians will, to a greater or lesser extent, strive to make public organizations more efficient, transparent, and client-focused. As a result, numerous policies will be developed to achieve such goals. Many public professionals will be tasked with implementing related policies, and public managers will be asked to administer and oversee their implementation. Hence, politicians, managers, and professionals will be inevitably connected. It is their shared task to serve the public.

In order to work effectively together, these groups will need to discuss and make trade-offs between different goals. It could pay to involve these professionals in the policymaking process. It has been shown that, if professionals are intensively involved during the development and revision of policies, this can increase their support for the policies. Moreover, policymakers can use the knowledge held by professionals to improve policies such that they become more *meaningful*, thereby adding value to socially relevant goals. Participation is a means to an end (see conclusion 3), and involving professionals is a viable possibility given that many professionals agree with the goals set by policymakers. This was noted by various mental healthcare professionals (open answers to survey discussed in Chapter 7):

> *"Government and insurance companies can involve us, highly educated professionals, more intensively and in a more positive way in the responsibility for making mental healthcare more affordable. Transparency and cost control: Yes."*

> *"In any event, healthcare professionals should be involved more intensively. Not only the price, but also the quality is very important."*

Public professionals can be involved in various ways (Needham, 2008). First, professional associations could take part in discussions regarding new policies. Second, co-creation can be encouraged through information technology. Internet forums and consultations can be used to discuss new policies with

various stakeholders (see for instance www.internetconsultatie.nl). Third, large-scale, regular surveys can be developed in order to check the level of field support for a policy and to receive suggestions for improving the policy. Within such a 'support monitor', the policy alienation framework could be a helpful analytical tool to assess the level of support, and the factors that influence this.

Alongside involving professionals, it might be worthwhile to try to change the way public professionals, public managers and policymakers view each other. Especially when talking with professionals, it seems that they feel disconnected from policymakers and public managers. For instance, many of the medical specialists could not identify at all with the policymakers of the Dutch Healthcare Authority (NZa). Their opinions of the directors of their own hospital were, to put it mildly, also not very positive (see also Visser, 2011). Hence, it seems that professionals are not only being alienated from the policy, but often also becoming alienated from policymakers and from their managers.

We would therefore urge professionals, managers, and policymakers to try to understand the different values of the other groups. These values have a legitimacy of their own. In Chapter 3, we analyzed this using the concept of role conflicts. Another study (Tummers, Vermeeren, Steijn, & Bekkers, forthcoming 2012) also examined and measured three forms of role conflict during policy implementation. This showed that a conflict between policy values and professional values especially heightened the resistance of professionals to implementing public policies. Although there are difficulties between managers, professionals, and policy makers, we have also seen some positive outcomes. For instance, some professionals stated that they could effectively cope with role conflicts by communicating with their manager (Chapter 3). Other recent studies also show that the relationship between managers and professionals is often better than assumed. Management can act as a 'buffer' for professionals, sometimes even when this harms their own direct interests (De Wit, 2012).

To further improve the cooperation between policymakers, managers and professionals, it could be worthwhile to let these workers swop positions for a few days each year so that they can understand each other's viewpoints. If professionals could work as a public manager for a few days, they will get an understanding of the issues these managers have to deal with. In these and other ways, cooperation during policy development and policy implementation may be improved, ultimately improving policy effectiveness.

Concluding, this study provides insights that help to understand how public professionals experience the policies they have to implement. We hope that the policy alienation framework developed can serve as a valuable tool in analyzing these experiences. More generally, we hope that this study helps in developing policies which are more readily accepted by implementing

professionals and that help to achieve important societal goals. If this happens, the level of policy alienation of public professionals will diminish, and maybe we will be able to change our perspective and start talking about policy embracement.

SUMMARY

Introduction

We started **Chapter 1** by arguing that, currently, there is an intense debate concerning professionals in the public sector (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Emery & Giauque, 2003; Hebson et al., 2003). Authors such as Duyvendak et al. (2006:35) and Freidson (2001) note that many of the pressures that professionals face are related to the difficulties they have with the policies they have to implement. An illustrative example is the introduction of a new reimbursement policy (known as Diagnosis Related Groups - in Dutch 'Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties', or DBC's) in mental healthcare in the Netherlands. In one large-scale survey, as many as nine out of ten professionals wanted this new policy abandoned (Palm et al., 2008). Psychologists even went as far as to openly demonstrate on the street against this policy. A major reason for this was that many could not align their professional values with the content of the policy. The following quotation from a healthcare professional is illustrative (see Chapter 5):

> *"We experience the DRG policy as a disaster. I concentrate as much as possible on treating my own patients, in order to derive some satisfaction from my work."*

This example is not unique. Overall, several studies are showing increasing identification problems among public professionals toward public policies (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; see also Hebson et al., 2003; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996).

However, although these identification problems have been acknowledged by scholars (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May, 2003; B. G. Peters & Pierre, 1998), there is to date no coherent, theory-based framework for analyzing this topic. This study addresses this issue by building a theoretical framework for 'policy alienation', building on the concept of work alienation developed in the field of sociology of work and labor. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection, from the policy program to be implemented, by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients.

Studying the policy alienation of public professionals can be highly relevant. Firstly, because, when implementers are unable to identify with a policy, this can negatively influence policy effectiveness and thereby organizational performance (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009). Secondly, a high degree of policy alienation can also affect the quality of interactions between professionals and citizens, which may eventually lower the

output legitimacy of government (Bekkers et al., 2007). A better understanding of policy alienation, its measurement, and the influencing factors and effects is therefore important for policymakers and managers if they want to develop policies that will be more readily accepted by implementing public professionals. In this study, we focus upon this new concept of 'policy alienation'.

Value of this study

This study is interdisciplinary in nature, and aims to contribute to debates in a number of research fields, such as change management and Human Resource Management (HRM). When discussing the theoretical, methodological, and practical values of the study, we focus on two bodies of work which are paramount for this study: policy implementation literature and public management literature.

Theoretical value - Building a theory on the experiences of public professionals with policies

In the policy implementation literature, both top-down and bottom-up approaches stress that identification by the implementer with the policy is a prerequisite for effective implementation (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975:482). More recent policy implementation research continues to stress that implementers should be able to identify with the policy they implement (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009; B. G. Peters & Pierre, 1998). As Ewalt & Jennings (2004:453) noted, "It is clear from the literature there is much that members of an organization can do to stymie policy implementation."

The policy alienation framework builds upon policy implementation research by emphasizing the crucial role of implementers in determining policy performance. It also adds to contemporary policy implementation research by framing the experiences of public professionals with the policy they have to implement in a coherent framework: that of policy alienation. The building of such a framework is theoretically innovative in the sense that although policy implementation scholars have emphasized the crucial role of the identification of implementers with the policy, few have developed and tested a framework for analyzing this topic (O'Toole, 2000).

Alongside being relevant to policy implementation research, this study also has value for public management, and especially for research concerning the pressures public professionals nowadays face. By applying a policy alienation perspective, we can enhance the understanding on how New Public Management policies (NPM) are experienced by professionals implementing policies. Ackroyd et al. (2007:9) note the dearth of systematic studies on the

effects of NPM restructuring. In particular, there are few studies on the NPM experiences of 'street-level' professionals. Using the policy alienation perspective, we can examine what really happens on 'the work floor'.

Methodological value – Quantitatively examining the experiences of public professionals

A second value of this study lies in its quantitative approach, used especially in the second part of the study (Chapters 5-9). To date, most policy implementation studies have had a rather qualitative nature. As O'Toole (2000:269) notes, "the move to multivariate explanation and large numbers of cases exposes the [policy implementation, LT] specialty to new or renewed challenges, which have yet to be addressed fully." Further, there is also an increasing need to quantify the experiences of public professionals with NPM. To date, most studies on NPM and professionals have similarly also had a rather qualitative nature (examples are Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Thomas & Davies, 2005). One of the strengths of this qualitative research is that it is able to capture the plethora of reasons for increasingly problematic public professional employment such as the quality of line management.

Quantitatively analyzing important research questions - such as the relationship between discretion and NPM (Brodkin, 2007) - can yield new insights, thereby adding to the debate. Some valuable quantitative research on policy implementation and public management has taken place. However, these studies often failed to use validated scales, although some have applied exploratory factor analyses and reliability techniques to test the quality of their scales. We use scale development techniques to construct validated scales for policy alienation. Further, only validated scales are used in the three quantitative studies on which this study is based. This large-sample quantitative approach can achieve new insights concerning experiences at the 'street-level', where public professionals implement governmental policies.

Practical value – Explicitly focusing on the practical usefulness of policy alienation framework

The gap between research and practice in public administration, public management, and policy implementation has been intensively debated (Egeberg, 1994; Graffy, 2008; O'Toole, 2000; O'Toole, 2004). For instance, Bogason and Brans (2008:92) observe that "the weak reception and application of public administration theory in practice suggests that the community of public administration academics may still be producing knowledge whose legitimacy and usefulness is questionable."

In this study, we explicitly focus on connecting theory with practice. First, as outlined earlier, we will develop a framework which helps in understanding why public professionals do or do not identify with the policies they have to implement, including influencing factors (such as the professional context and the content of the policy) and the consequences (such as resistance to change and job dissatisfaction). The policy alienation framework can be a helpful analytical tool when examining professionals' resistance to, or compliance with, new policies. Second, we will develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure policy alienation by using scale development techniques (see Chapter 5). Practitioners, such as policymakers and professional associations, can use this policy alienation measurement instrument to analyze the general level of alienation from, or identification with, a new policy by professionals. More specifically, this instrument identifies those dimensions on which professionals have problems with a new policy, for instance that they feel that they do not have enough autonomy during policy implementation (high operational powerlessness) or that they cannot see the benefits of the policy for their own clients (high client meaninglessness). This can help identify appropriate interventions to reduce the degree of policy alienation, thereby countering the problems professionals encounter when implementing policies. Further, a step-by-step guide for practitioners who want to employ the policy alienation framework to study the experiences of public professionals with a particular policy is developed (see Appendix 1).

Research questions and corresponding answers

Based on the theoretical, methodological, and practical values this study aimed to satisfy, we developed research questions and defined the outline of this study. This study aims to answer the following main research question:

How can the policy alienation of public professionals be conceptualized and measured, and what are its influencing factors and effects?

The main research question breaks down into four research questions:

1. How to conceptualize the policy alienation of public professionals?
2. What are the main factors that influence policy alienation?
3. How can policy alienation be measured?
4. What are the main effects of policy alienation?

RQ 1 – Answer: Policy alienation can best be conceptualized using five sub-dimensions

The first research question concerns how to conceptualize policy alienation. In **Chapter 2**, a historical overview of the alienation concept was provided, by examining the use of the alienation concept by authors such as Hegel, Marx, Fromm, and Weber. From these analyses, we concluded that the concepts of alienation, bureaucracy, and policy implementation are inherently connected. Based on this, **Chapter 3** conceptualized policy alienation. Building upon insights from the literature on work alienation and public administration literature a first policy alienation framework was developed, which was then tested in an exploratory study of insurance physicians and labor experts. As with work alienation, policy alienation was seen as a multidimensional concept. Viewed from this perspective, it has similarities with some well-known concepts in the social sciences, such as public service motivation (PSM), organizational commitment, and not surprisingly work alienation.

We conceptualized a policy alienation framework based on theoretical insights from the work alienation and public administration literatures, and explored and tested this framework in a number of empirical analyses (for an overview, see Chapter 10). We concluded that a policy framework consisting of two main dimensions (powerlessness and meaninglessness), which could be further broken down into five dimensions (strategic, tactical, and operational powerlessness, plus societal and client meaninglessness) was most appropriate, based on both theoretical arguments and empirical results. The operationalization of this final policy alienation framework is shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Operationalization of policy alienation: the five dimensions

Dimension	Definition	Examples of high scores
Strategic powerlessness	The perceived influence of professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as captured in rules and regulations.	A professional feeling that the policy is drafted without the help of implementing professionals or professional associations.
Tactical powerlessness	The professionals' perceived influence on decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within their own organization.	Professionals stating that the managers in the organization did not consult them or their colleagues when designing the policy implementation process.
Operational powerlessness	The perceived degree of freedom in making choices concerning the sort, quantity, and quality of sanctions and rewards on offer when implementing the policy.	Answering 'fully agree' to a survey question on whether the professional feels that their autonomy during the implementation process was lower than it should be.
Societal meaninglessness	The perception of professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals.	Stating in an interview that "I agree with the policy goal of enhancing transparency, but I do not see how this policy helps to achieve this goal."
Client meaninglessness	The professionals' perceptions of the added value of them implementing a policy for their own clients.	A professional who argues that a particular policy seriously impinges on their clients' privacy.

RQ 2 – Answer: Context and content are important in explaining policy alienation

The second research question asked which factors are important in explaining policy alienation. **Chapter 3** and **Chapter 4** considered a number of influencing factors. These can be classified into two broad categories: factors related to the context in which policy implementation takes place and factors related to the content of the policy.

Three contextual factors could be distinguished based on theoretical arguments and empirical analyses. First, the professional context, relating to the level of the professionalism of the implementing public professionals. One indicator of professionalism is having a strong professional association. We showed that, the weaker the professional association, the greater the strategic powerlessness experienced by the implementing professionals. For example, for the insurance physicians and the labor experts, the weak positions of their

professional associations contributed to the feeling of many physicians and labor experts that they were strategically powerless.

Next to the professional context, the political context was also found to be an important factor explaining the degree of policy alienation felt by the public professionals. The political context was sometimes characterized by a multitude of policy changes. Too many changes contribute to feelings of societal meaninglessness. The following quote from an interviewed physician illustrates this:

> *"Lately there have been so many changes: first the adjustments to the ASB, now the law regarding work and income. It happens all the time. I do not feel 'connected' with politicians. Often they propose things which are not well thought out, but which have to be implemented right away."*

The third and final contextual factor we distinguished was the organizational context of the implementing professionals. Policy implementation by public professionals happens in and around organizations, which means that the organizational context is clearly able to influence the way in which public professionals experience new policies. For instance, an organization with a number of NPM characteristics could heighten the degree of policy alienation felt by the professionals.

Alongside these contextual factors, factors related to the policy itself influenced the degree of policy alienation. Firstly, the type of policy goal influenced the policy alienation felt by the public professionals, most notably in terms of their societal meaninglessness. Goals focusing on efficiency seemed to heighten societal meaninglessness, while quality-based goals were perceived in a more positive light. Next to the goals of the policy, the actual content of the policy also influenced the degree of policy alienation. Most importantly, the strictness of the rules influenced policy alienation.

RQ 3 – Answer: Policy alienation can be measured using a 26-item measurement instrument

The third research question considered how to measure policy alienation. **Chapter 5** dealt with this research question extensively, using a case study of the implementation, by psychiatrists, psychotherapists, and psychologists, of Diagnosis Related Groups in Dutch mental healthcare. To be able to measure the five sub-dimensions of policy alienation identified, scale development techniques, as described by DeVellis (2003; see also Hinkin, 1998), were followed. Based on these scale-development steps and a survey of 478 mental

healthcare professionals, an initial 23-item policy alienation measurement instrument was constructed. In a second survey of 1,317 mental healthcare professionals (Chapters 7 and 8), we tested this developed scale and were largely satisfied with its appropriateness. At this stage, we decided to construct three additional items for strategic powerlessness as that scale was rather short. Finally, this 26-item measurement instrument was again tested on another policy in a different context, here with Dutch midwives implementing the twenty-week ultrasound (SEO) policy (Chapter 9). Based on the analysis of a survey of 790 midwives, we concluded that this 26-item measurement instrument for policy alienation was adequate. That is, based on theoretical arguments and empirical analyses, a policy alienation measurement instrument was constructed that consisted of 26 items. More details are provided in Appendix 1 (Table 1.1).

RQ 4 – Answer: Policy alienation affects willingness to implement policies, behavioral support for the policy, and job satisfaction

The final research question investigates the effects of policy alienation. In this study, we found that policy alienation affected three important outcome variables: willingness to implement public policies, behavioral support for the policy, and job satisfaction.

The influence of policy alienation on the willingness to implement public policies was described in **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7**. Throughout change management history, it is has been fairly consistently claimed that a crucial condition for success is that employees are willing to implement the change (Carnall, 2007; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Judson, 1991). Based on literature from the change management and public administration streams, we constructed a theoretical model linking five dimensions of policy alienation to change willingness. This model was tested in a survey of 478 mental healthcare professionals implementing a new reimbursement policy. The model worked adequately in that the policy alienation dimensions, together with conventional control variables, explained over 40% of the variance in change willingness.

More specifically, three sub-dimensions of policy alienation were found to influence willingness to implement policies. Of the powerlessness sub-dimensions, operational powerlessness was significant: the more that mental healthcare professionals felt they had little autonomy when implementing the DRG policy (i.e. a high operational powerlessness), the less supportive they were of this policy. Strategic and tactical powerlessness were however insignificant. The most important factor in explaining willingness to implement policies turned out to be societal meaninglessness: the perception of professionals concerning the added value of a policy to socially relevant goals. Professionals

who felt that a policy did not contribute to the stated goals (such as efficiency and transparency) were far less willing to implement it. Further, when these professionals felt that the DRG policy was not contributing to the welfare of their own clients (high client meaninglessness), their willingness to implement this policy again decreased.

Next, we studied behavioral support for the policy, using a case study of midwives implementing the twenty-week ultrasound policy in **Chapter 9**. Behavioral support for a change (in this case, a policy) reflects the actions that employees take to support or resist a change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). For instance, professionals may go above and beyond what is formally required to help ensure the success of a policy by promoting it to others. This is termed 'championing'. At the other end of the continuum, professionals can demonstrate strong opposition to a new policy by engaging in overt behaviors that are intended to ensure that the policy fails. As expected, the policy alienation dimensions have a strong influence on behavioral support for a policy. In other words, when professionals feel that they have no influence in the shaping of a policy (powerlessness) or think the policy is not beneficial for society in general or for their own clients (meaninglessness), they will show resistant behavior toward the policy, such as holding demonstrations. As with the willingness to implement the policy, we found that the level of policy meaninglessness experienced was more important in explaining behavioral support for a policy than the level of policy powerlessness.

In **Chapter 8**, we analyzed the relationship between policy powerlessness and job satisfaction. Both operational powerlessness and tactical powerlessness negatively influenced job satisfaction. That is, when professionals feel that they have no autonomy during the implementation of a policy, they will be less satisfied with their jobs. Further, if they do not feel that they can influence the way in which their organization implements the policy, they will be less satisfied. In addition, we found that the effect of tactical powerlessness on job satisfaction was strongest among professionals working in a highly politicized environment. Offering some influence is likely to reduce insecurity and increase the sense of control, and this is especially important in organizations when there is a lot of insecurity due to the many political games being played (Witt et al., 2000). This emphasizes the contextual nature of policy implementation by public professionals. In some organizations, it will be more beneficial to engage professionals in the way a policy is implemented than in others.

Out six main conclusions and corresponding recommendations

We can now examine the main conclusions drawn from this study. Here, we move beyond the answers to the main research questions and relate our results to literature and to practice. We have already emphasized that this study followed an interdisciplinary approach using different bodies of literature. The main contributions of this study similarly lie in a range of research fields, but primarily in the fields of public management and policy implementation.

Conclusion 1 – NPM is influential, but a broader view is necessary

This study started with the statement that New Public Management practices put pressures on public professionals in service delivery. We indeed found that NPM influences the degree of policy alienation experienced by public professionals. For example, the more that management concretizes a policy by focusing on performance measurements and output controls, the greater the degree of powerlessness and meaninglessness experienced. In this way, we provide further evidence that NPM-type performance management systems can have undesirable effects (P. Smith, 1995; Van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002).

However, we should note that NPM is a loose term, and no two authors list exactly the same features (Hood & Peters, 2004:268). Further, the characteristics credited to NPM can be inherently conflicting in themselves (Hood, 1991). Moreover, even if we do try to define NPM, for example by using the seven components proposed by Hood (1991), we see that there are factors that influence the degree of policy alienation that are not directly related to NPM. For instance, we found that both the status of the profession and the power of the professional association influence the degree of policy alienation experienced. As such, NPM is clearly not the only factor that puts pressure on professionals. Next, we noticed that the NPM pressures were not universally perceived. For instance, some physicians stated that they could effectively cope with the increased performance pressures by communicating with their manager. Concluding, although NPM is an important factor in influencing the experiences of public professionals with new policies, a broader view is necessary.

In terms of research, this conclusion seems at odds with the statements of some authors (for example Emery & Giauque, 2003; J. Peters & Pouw, 2005) that NPM is the major, and maybe only, factor that pressurizes professionals. Our empirical analyses are more in line with other authors (for example Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Kirkpatrick et al., 2005; Leicht & Fennell, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007; Noordegraaf, 2008) who urge one to look for larger forces at work, such as the emancipation of clients, the introduction of new technologies, and the demands posed by politicians and policymakers. We can

add a number of factors to this list, such as the political and professional contexts (see Figure 10.1).

To practitioners, such as politicians and policymakers, we also would recommend incorporating this broader view. Alongside the degree of NPM, they should also consider the professional and political contexts in which implementation takes place, as well as the policy goals and the rules and regulations of the policy (see Figure 10.1). For instance, policymakers could choose to involve professional associations more intensively, or to relax the rules in order to leave professionals some discretion in applying the rules on a case-by-case basis. Further, we found that introducing numerous policy changes increases the sense of policy alienation, as professionals feel overwhelmed by the changes: a case of change fatigue (Judson, 1991). We therefore advise policymakers to limit the number of policy changes, in line with recommendations made concerning education reforms (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b).

Conclusion 2 – Autonomy remains critical for public professionals

In our study, we analyzed operational powerlessness during policy implementation, an aspect often referred to as discretion (especially when applied to street-level public servants) or autonomy during policy implementation (when talking about professionals). We observed that operational powerlessness, or discretion, strongly influences both the willingness to implement new policies and the job satisfaction felt by public professionals. According to the professionals in our studies, their degree of operational powerlessness was quite high, making it more difficult to adjust treatment to the specific needs of a patient. As one professional argued (from the open answers to a survey, see Chapter 7):

> *"Patients receive a 'label' from a classification system […] Sometimes a patient fits into a 'depression' but really needs something more than a neat 'Cognitive Behavioral Therapy protocol of ten sessions'. If time and number of sessions rather than content start leading, it becomes impossible to provide patient-centered care."*

Furthermore, we showed in Chapter 8 that operational powerlessness has a strongly negative influence on the job satisfaction of public professionals. Thus, when professionals feel that they have no discretion during the implementation of a policy, they will be less willing to implement that policy *and* be less satisfied with their jobs. Thus, overall, we have shown that a low degree of discretion has

negative consequences, including on the willingness to implement public policies and on the job satisfaction of public professionals.

This conclusion adds significance to statements in the current debate on pressured professionals, where one sees claims made by leading authors such as Freidson (2001) that the autonomy of professionals is diminishing. Further, it seems that the notion of discretion remains crucial on the policy implementation level (Elmore, 1985; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Lipsky, 1980). High levels of discretion can enhance policy performance by increasing the willingness to implement, with implementers being given the opportunity to adapt the policy to the situations of their clients (Hill & Hupe, 2009:52, see also Lipsky, 1980).

For policymakers and public managers, this means that they should be careful in reducing the autonomy of the public professionals who have to implement a policy. We are not saying that they should never impinge on professional autonomy, since autonomy can have substantial disadvantages, such as empire building and inefficiency (Deakin, 1994; Lipsky, 1980). What we are cautioning is that diminishing the autonomy of professionals should be a deliberate, informed choice, taking account of the possible advantages and disadvantages. Further, the negative consequences on the job satisfaction of public professionals should be of concern for both the individual employee and for the organization as a whole (Van de Voorde, 2009), as job satisfaction can influence organizational citizenship, turnover, and job performance. Hence, any reduction in autonomy (genuine or perceived) could have severe effects on the individual, policy, and organizational levels.

Conclusion 3 – Public professionals are not against business goals, but question the ways and means to reach such goals

The third conclusion of this study concerns the attitudes of professionals toward business values, such as efficiency and client choice. In the case study on Diagnosis Related Groups, the healthcare professionals surveyed (over 1,700 in total) did not on average oppose the business goals of this policy. If anything, rather the opposite, they welcomed goals such as efficiency and increasing client choice (Tummers, 2011b). For instance, the average score for the item 'In my opinion, enhancing the efficiency of mental healthcare is a goal very worthy of pursuing' was 8.1 (on a 1 to 10 scale).

However, although the professionals did agree with the *goals* of the policy, they did not think that the *means* (i.e. the DRG policy) would achieve them. The average scores for agreeing with the goals and achieving the goals were very different: for agreeing with the goals of efficiency and of transparency

they were quite high (8.1 and 7.8 respectively), while the professionals did not think that these goals would be met (3.4 and 3.6 respectively).

On the basis of these findings, it is unwarranted to claim that public professionals are against business goals as such. This is an interesting observation as it contradicts research in the field of public administration. Some New Public Management scholars argue that business goals, such as efficiency, are, by definition, not welcomed by professionals (Emery & Giauque, 2003; Van den Brink et al., 2006). On the contrary, we found that professionals are unwilling to implement a policy not because it focuses on business goals, but because it would not achieve them.

Based on this, we would advise policy implementation scholars and change management scholars to examine whether the means provided are sufficient to achieve the goals of a change. This means that they should examine the *content* of a change. For instance, the DRG policy was structured in such a way that it gave rise to many perverse financial incentives, making it very difficult for the policy to achieve some of its goals, such as efficiency. Today, change management scholars in particular do not examine the content of a change, but focus primarily on the processes (such as communication, training) involved in achieving a change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Holt et al., 2006). We have shown that this can sometimes be inadequate in explaining the success of a policy or change. We hope that future research will therefore explicitly take account of the content of a change or policy.

This conclusion also has implications for practitioners. First, for policymakers and change agents implementing policies, it indicates that business goals such as increasing efficiency or client choice can indeed be seen as valuable goals by implementers. As such, policymakers and change agents could more openly state that these are the goals being pursued and, further, they could involve professionals in debates on how to achieve these goals. Further, practitioners could also enhance their understanding of the content of particular policies, and the associated behavior that could be anticipated from implementing professionals. One way to do this would be to develop scenarios for the behavior of implementing professionals given the rules of the policy. Based on this, practitioners could modify policy rules before introducing them to alter the behavioral incentives for implementing professionals. Nowadays, this is often only done ex-post, for instance one year after a policy has been in place.

Conclusion 4 – Focus upon enhancing meaningfulness, not influence

In the policy implementation, change management, and general HRM literatures, there is a lot of emphasis on employee participation and influence

(the opposite of powerlessness). In this study, we examined the impact of powerlessness and meaninglessness on both the policy level (based on the policy alienation concept) and on the work level (based on the work alienation concept). We found that, for all the outcome variables, the impact of societal and client meaninglessness was stronger than the impact of strategic and tactical powerlessness. For instance, we found that the willingness to implement a policy and behavioral support for a policy is more dependent on the level of policy meaninglessness experienced than the degree of policy powerlessness. Hence, for public professionals it is more important to see the logic of a new policy than to have the feeling of being able to influence its shaping. Further, we found that work-level indictors such as work effort and intention to leave were related more strongly to work meaninglessness than to work powerlessness.

Based on the results of our study, we feel we should nuance the impacts of employee influence on the strategic and tactical levels (operational powerlessness, or autonomy, however, remains crucial, see conclusion 2). That is, we would urge scholars to more intensively consider the *meaninglessness* dimension. Future research could usefully look on two levels. First, it could examine the meaninglessness of a specific object, such as the meaninglessness of a specific policy or of an organizational change. Second, scholars could study the meaninglessness felt by professionals, or other employees, on the general, work, level.

We would advise practitioners to focus their attention on the perceived meaninglessness of work or of a policy, rather than focus on aspects of powerlessness. It seems that concentrating on aspects of participation or powerlessness alone is ineffective. Participation, if you believe that the policy rules and regulations are already set, offers little. If participation is to be practiced, it should be a *means* to enhance the meaningfulness of a policy - not a goal in itself. For instance, policymakers and managers could arrange work sessions with professionals or professional associations to discuss a new policy before it is fully defined such that it can be adapted based on the outcomes of these sessions. In this way, participation can help to draft a better policy, which in turn will enhance its meaningfulness.

Conclusion 5 – Policy content, organizational context, and personality characteristics are all influential

The fifth conclusion refers to three groups of factors that influence the willingness to implement a public policy: the policy content (what?), the organizational context (where?), and personality characteristics (who?). We found that these three groups of factors were all important in explaining the willingness of professionals to implement public policies. The policy alienation

variables (grouped under policy content and organizational context) proved to be most influential. This shows that other factors, alongside policy alienation, also influence the willingness to implement a policy. For instance, the personalities of the psychiatrists, psychologists, and psychotherapists implementing the DRG policy did, to some extent, explain why they resisted the policy: the more rebellious mental health professionals were less willing to implement DRGs.

In general terms, this conclusion suggests that, in order to increase understanding of public policy implementation, scholars should try to include multiple factors in explaining the willingness or reluctance of public professionals to implement policies. An interdisciplinary approach proved adequate in our individual cases.

For practitioners, this conclusion implies that many factors play a part in explaining willingness to implement public policies. The most important factors are related to the policy itself, such as the associated operational powerlessness, and the societal and client meaninglessness attached to it. Practitioners should first and foremost assess which aspects of the policy are likely to influence the willingness or resistance of professionals. Second, they should look at the organizational context in which the professionals are working. Finally, policymakers and managers could examine the personality characteristics of the professionals involved although these characteristics are only influential to a very limited extent, adding only 2% to the explained variance (see Chapter 7). Hence, it seems that resistance is largely not rooted in someone's personal characteristics. This is good news for policymakers, managers, and change agents who want to gain acceptance for a new policy.

Conclusion 6 – The developed policy alienation framework is appropriate

Our final and central conclusion relates to the developed policy alienation framework. In Chapter 2, we concentrated on the historical development of the alienation concept. In Chapter 3, we discussed more recent works that consider alienation and combined this with public administration literature to conceptualize the policy alienation of public professionals. We then tested the framework using a pair of case studies: insurance physicians and labor experts implementing a new policy on re-examining welfare clients (Chapter 3 and 4); and secondary school teachers implementing a new policy called 'The Second Phase' (Chapter 4).

We strengthened the methodological basis of the policy alienation framework by developing its measurement using scale development techniques. We addressed common methodological considerations such as reliability and a number of validity types (Chapter 5). Based on the scale-development, some

additional strengthening of the scale (Chapter 7) and further testing of the scale in a different context with a policy with was positively received by the professionals (Chapter 9), a 26-item policy alienation measurement instrument was constructed which was shown to be psychometrically sound.

The developed scale for policy alienation was then used to investigate possible effects of policy alienation. On the policy level, we studied its effects on willingness to implement public policies and on behavioral support for a policy. First we showed that the dimensions of policy alienation strongly affect both the willingness to implement public policies (Chapters 6, 7, and 9) and the behavioral support for the policy (Chapter 9). In Chapter 7, we demonstrated that the policy alienation dimensions were the most important variables in explaining willingness to implement a policy. On the work level, Chapter 8 showed that tactical and operational powerlessness influenced the job satisfaction of professionals.

Furthermore, we showed that policy alienation was indeed different from work alienation. In Chapter 9, we had argued that the policy alienation and work alienation concepts were distinct. Most importantly, we argued that policy alienation related to alienation from the policy being implemented, rather than from the job being done. In Chapter 9, we empirically showed that policy alienation and work alienation were indeed different concepts. In general, we can conclude, based on theoretical arguments, methodological soundness, and practical testing, that the framework derived is appropriate for assessing policy alienation.

Samenvatting (summary in Dutch)

Introductie

Hoofdstuk 1 start door te stellen dat er een intensief maatschappelijk debat gaande is over de rol van professionals in de publieke sector (Ackroyd et al., 2007; Currie et al., 2009; Emery & Giauque, 2003; Hebson et al., 2003). Auteurs zoals Duyvendak e.a. (2006:35) en Freidson (2001) geven aan dat veel publieke professionals problemen hebben met het beleid dat ze moeten uitvoeren. Een voorbeeld is de introductie van DBC's (DiagnoseBehandelingCombinaties) in de Nederlandse geestelijke gezondheidszorg. Een grootschalig onderzoek concludeerde dat negen van de tien zorgprofessionals wilden stoppen met het DBC-beleid (Palm et al., 2008). Een aantal zorgprofessionals ging zelfs demonstreren tegen dit beleid, en er werden protestwebsites opgericht, zoals www.dbcvrij.nl en www.deggzlaatzichhoren.nl. Een belangrijke reden hiervan was dat volgens veel professionals de professionele waarden niet samengaan met de inhoud van dit nieuwe beleid. De volgende citaten van zorgprofessionals zijn illustratief (zie ook Hoofdstuk 5):

"We ervaren DBC's als een niet te ontkomen ramp en wachten de toekomst af. Ik concentreer me zoveel mogelijk op mijn patiënten om nog plezier in mijn werk te houden."

"Het DBC-systeem straft degene die zich met meer complexe problemen bezighoudt, en zet een premie op het behandelen van eenvoudige problematiek. Patiënten en kwaliteit lijden daar uiteindelijk onder."

Dit voorbeeld is niet uniek. Meerdere studies laten zien dat veel publieke professionals problemen hebben om zich te identificeren met het beleid dat ze moeten uitvoeren (Bottery, 1998; Duyvendak et al., 2006; Freidson, 2001; zie ook Hebson et al., 2003; Pratchett & Wingfield, 1996).

Hoewel een aantal auteurs deze identificatieproblemen heeft opgemerkt (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May, 2003; B. G. Peters & Pierre, 1998), is er nog geen coherent theoretisch raamwerk om dit onderwerp te analyseren. Dit proefschrift vult deze lacune door een theoretisch raamwerk over beleidsvervreemding (policy alienation) te ontwikkelen. We definiëren beleidsvervreemding als een algemene cognitieve staat van psychologische ontkoppeling met het beleid, in dit geval van de publieke professional die het beleid uitvoert.

Het bestuderen van beleidsvervreemding van publieke professionals is relevant. Ten eerste omdat, als professionals zich vervreemd voelen van het beleid, dit de effectiviteit van het beleid en zo de prestaties van een organisatie negatief kan beïnvloeden (Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009). Ten tweede kan door een hoge mate van beleidsvervreemding de relatie tussen professional en burger verslechteren. Dit kan de outputlegitimiteit van de overheid in gevaar brengen (Bekkers et al., 2007). Een beter begrip van beleidsvervreemding, de meting hiervan en haar oorzaken en effecten is belangrijk voor beleidsmakers en publieke managers als zij beleid willen ontwikkelen dat professionals accepteren. In dit proefschrift richten wij ons op dit nieuwe concept 'beleidsvervreemding'.

Waarde van dit proefschrift

Met dit proefschrift willen we bijdragen aan debatten in verschillende onderzoeksterreinen, zoals onder andere verandermanagement en Human Resource Management (HRM). Twee onderzoeksterreinen zijn echter vooral belangrijk in dit proefschrift: beleidsimplementatie en publiek management. We geven voor deze terreinen hier de theoretische, methodologische en praktische waarde van dit proefschrift weer.

Theoretische waarde – Ontwikkeling theorie over ervaringen van professionals met nieuw beleid

In de beleidsimplementatieliteratuur geven zowel 'top-down' als 'bottom-up' benaderingen aan dat het cruciaal is dat werknemers zich kunnen identificeren met het beleid dat ze moeten uitvoeren (Hill & Hupe, 2009; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975:482; Ewalt & Jennings, 2004; May & Winter, 2009). Ewalt en Jennings (2004:453) stellen bijvoorbeeld dat: "It is clear from the literature there is much that members of an organization can do to stymie policy implementation."

Het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding bouwt voort op beleidsimplementatieonderzoek. Het benadrukt de cruciale rol van beleidsuitvoerders voor goede beleidsprestaties. Maar het is ook vernieuwend, omdat het een samenhangend raamwerk biedt om de ervaringen van professionals, met het beleid dat ze moeten invoeren, te begrijpen en te meten (O'Toole, 2000).

Dit proefschrift is ook waardevol voor de publiek management literatuur, specifiek voor onderzoek dat zich richt op het debat over professionals in de publieke sector. Door gebruik te maken van het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding, kunnen we beter begrijpen hoe NPM beleid (Nieuw Publiek Management) door professionals wordt ervaren. NPM-beleid is beleid

dat zich richt op het bevorderen van economische waarden, zoals efficiëntie (zie voor een uitgebreide discussie Hood, 1991). Ackroyd e.a. (2007:9) geven aan dat er weinig systematische studies zijn over de effecten van NPM. Meer specifiek zijn er weinig studies die zich richten op hoe NPM door professionals op 'de werkvloer' wordt ervaren. Door gebruik te maken van het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding, kunnen we onderzoeken wat er op deze werkvloer gebeurt.

Methodologische waarde – Ervaringen van publieke professionals kwantitatief analyseren

De tweede waarde van dit proefschrift ligt in de kwantitatieve aanpak (zie Hoofdstuk 5-9). Tot op heden heeft veel beleidsimplementatieonderzoek een kwalitatieve focus. O'Toole (2000:269) stelt dat "the move to multivariate explanation and large numbers of cases exposes the [policy implementation, LT] specialty to new or renewed challenges, which have yet to be addressed fully." Hiernaast is er meer behoefte om de ervaringen van publieke professionals met NPM te kwantificeren. Veel studies op het gebied van NPM en professionals zijn kwalitatief (bijvoorbeeld Ackroyd et al., 2007; De Ruyter et al., 2008; Thomas & Davies, 2005). Een van de sterke punten van dit kwalitatieve onderzoek is dat het de verschillende redenen voor de problemen van professionals weergeeft, zoals een slechte relatie met het management of een laag salaris. Een kwantitatieve aanpak kan nieuwe inzichten opleveren, bijvoorbeeld door op basis van een groot survey te analyseren waarom professionals weerstand vertonen, en hiervoor de belangrijkste oorzaken aan te geven.

Er is al waardevol kwantitatief onderzoek op het gebied van beleidsimplementatie en publiek management uitgevoerd. Maar deze studies gebruiken vaak geen gevalideerde schalen, hoewel ze soms wel factoranalyses en betrouwbaarheidsanalyses uitvoeren om de kwaliteit van hun schalen te testen. In dit proefschrift maken we gebruik van schaalontwikkelingsmethoden om gevalideerde schalen voor beleidsvervreemding te ontwikkelen. Verder gebruiken we alleen gevalideerde schalen uit ander (vaak psychologisch en verandermanagement-) onderzoek. Deze aanpak kan nieuwe, waardevolle, inzichten geven over de ervaringen van publieke professionals met nieuw beleid.

Praktische waarde – Focus op praktische waarde van raamwerk van beleidsvervreeming

Er is veel gedebatteerd over de kloof tussen wetenschappelijk bestuurskundig onderzoek en de praktijk van de publieke sector (Egeberg, 1994; Graffy, 2008; O'Toole, 2000; O'Toole, 2004). Bogason en Brans (2008:92) stellen bijvoorbeeld dat "The weak reception and application of public administration

theory in practice suggests that the community of public administration academics may still be producing knowledge whose legitimacy and usefulness is questionable."

In dit proefschrift richten we ons nadrukkelijk op het verbinden van theorie en praktijk. Ten eerste, zoals al genoemd, willen we een raamwerk ontwikkelen dat helpt om te begrijpen waarom publieke professionals wel of juist niet vervreemden van het beleid dat ze moeten uitvoeren. Hier kijken we ook naar de oorzaken (zoals de politieke context en de inhoud van het beleid) en de effecten van beleidsvervreemding (zoals weerstand tegen nieuw beleid en ontevredenheid met het werk). Het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding kan bijvoorbeeld een waardevol analytisch handvat zijn om te bestuderen waarom professionals weerstand vertonen tegen nieuw beleid. Ten tweede ontwikkelen we een betrouwbaar en valide instrument om beleidsvervreemding te meten (zie Hoofdstuk 5). Mensen uit het veld – zoals beleidsmakers en leden van professionele verenigingen – kunnen dit meetinstrument gebruiken om te mate van vervreemding (of identificatie) te bepalen. Dit meetinstrument geeft ook aan op welke onderdelen (dimensies) professionals problemen hebben met het nieuwe beleid, bijvoorbeeld omdat ze te weinig autonomie ervaren bij beleidsuitvoering of dat ze niet zien hoe het beleid goed is voor hun eigen cliënten. Op basis hiervan kunnen er acties worden ondernomen om de mate van beleidsvervreemding te verlagen. Ten derde geven we voor elke conclusie in dit proefschrift aan wat de praktische implicaties zijn. Tot slot hebben we een stappenprogramma ontwikkeld voor mensen die het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding willen gebruiken voor hun eigen onderzoek of in hun eigen organisatie (zie Appendix 1). Via deze vier wegen willen we de kloof tussen bestuurskundig onderzoek en de praktijk van de publieke sector verkleinen.

Onderzoeksvragen en de beantwoording hiervan

Op basis van de theoretisch, methodologische en praktische doelstellingen van dit proefschrift, is de volgende hoofdvraag geformuleerd:

Hoe kan beleidsvervreemding worden geconceptualiseerd en gemeten, en wat zijn oorzaken en effecten van beleidsvervreemding?

De hoofdvraag is opgedeeld uit vier onderzoeksvragen:

1. Hoe kan beleidsvervreemding worden geconceptualiseerd?
2. Wat zijn oorzaken voor beleidsvervreemding?
3. Hoe kan beleidsvervreemding worden gemeten?
4. Wat zijn effecten van beleidsvervreemding?

1 – Beleidsvervreemding kan worden geconceptualiseerd met vijf dimensies

De eerste onderzoeksvraag behandelt de conceptualisatie van beleidsvervreemding. **Hoofdstuk 2** geeft een historisch overzicht van het begrip vervreemding. Het gaat hier in op het gebruik van het begrip door onder andere Hegel, Marx, Fromm en Weber. Op basis van de analyse in Hoofdstuk 2 concluderen we dat de begrippen vervreemding, bureaucratie en beleidsimplementatie sterk met elkaar verbonden zijn. Op basis hiervan conceptualiseren we in **Hoofdstuk 3** beleidsvervreemding, waarbij dit hoofdstuk ook gebruikmaakt van recente inzichten uit de arbeids- en organisatiesociologie en de bestuurskunde. Het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding testen we in een verkennende Nederlandse studie van verzekeringsartsen en arbeidsdeskundigen, die als nieuw beleid de WAO-herkeuringen moeten invoeren. Beleidsvervreemding zien we als een concept met meerdere dimensies. Hier heeft het raakvlakken met belangrijke concepten uit de sociale wetenschappen, zoals Public Service Motivation, betrokkenheid bij de organisatie en werkvervreemding.

Het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding is verder verkend en getest in het proefschrift (zie voor een overzicht Hoofdstuk 10). Na analyse van vier cases concludeerden we dat beleidsvervreemding uit twee hoofddimensies bestaat (machteloosheid en zinloosheid), die weer uiteenvallen in vijf dimensies (strategisch, tactische en operationele machteloosheid, en zinloosheid voor de samenleving en voor de cliënt). Tabel 1 geeft dit raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding kort weer:

Tabel 1 Raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding: Vijf dimensies

Dimensie	Definitie	Voorbeelden van hoge scores
Strategische machteloosheid	De mate van gepercipieerde invloed van professionals op de inhoud van het beleid, zoals vastgesteld in wet- en regelgeving.	Een professional die het gevoel heeft dat het beleid is ontworpen zonder professionele verenigingen te betrekken.
Tactische machteloosheid	De mate van gepercipieerde invloed van professionals op de manier waarop hun organisatie het beleid implementeert.	Professionals die aangeven dat managers in hun organisatie hen niet hebben betrokken bij het uitwerken van het beleid voor hun organisatie.
Operationele macheloosheid	De mate van gepercipieerde invloed van professionals op de manier waarop zij zelf het beleid uitvoeren.	'Zeer mee eens' antwoorden op een item dat stelt de autonomie tijdens de beleidsuitvoering zeer laag was.
Zinloosheid voor de samenleving	De perceptie van de professionals over de toegevoegde waarde van het beleid aan belangrijke doelen voor de samenleving.	In een interview aangeven: "Ik ben het eens met het doel om de transparantie te vergroten, maar ik begrijp niet hoe dit beleid bijdraagt aan dat doel".
Zinloosheid voor de eigen cliënten	De perceptie van de professionals over de toegevoegde waarde van het beleid voor hun eigen cliënten.	Een professional die aangeeft dat het nieuwe beleid de privacy van zijn of haar patiënten ernstig in gevaar brengt.

2 – Context en beleidsinhoud belangrijke oorzaken voor beleidsvervreemding

De tweede onderzoeksvraag ging over de oorzaken van beleidsvervreemding. Waarom ervaren professionals beleidsvervreemding? **Hoofdstuk 3** en **Hoofdstuk 4** behandelden deze onderzoeksvraag. De oorzaken kunnen we opdelen in twee categorieën: oorzaken op het gebied van de context van beleidsimplementatie en oorzaken gerelateerd aan de beleidsinhoud zelf.

We onderscheiden drie oorzaken op het gebied van de context. Ten eerste de professionele context. Deze gaat over de mate van professionalisme van de publieke professionals, zoals de sterkte van hun professionele vereniging en de status van de professie. In de studie over verzekeringsartsen en arbeidsdeskundigen constateerden we bijvoorbeeld dat de zwakte van hun professionele verenigingen ervoor zorgt dat veel professionals zich machteloos voelden op strategisch niveau (hoge strategische machteloosheid).

Naast de professionele context bleek de politieke context van invloed op de mate van beleidsvervreemding. Deze politieke context kenmerkte zich vaak door veel beleidsveranderingen. Bij de casus van de verzekeringsartsen en de

arbeidsdeskundigen waren er veel beleidsveranderingen, zoals de WAO-herkeuringen (Aangepast schattingsbesluit), Wet Verbetering Poortwachter en de Wet Werk en Inkomen naar Arbeidsvermogen (WIA). Een dergelijke situatie draagt bij aan gevoelens van zinloosheid ten aanzien van (weer) nieuw beleid (hoge zinloosheid voor de samenleving). Een geïnterviewde verzekeringsarts zegt hierover:

> *"Er zijn de laatste tijd zo vaak veranderingen geweest. Dan weer de WIA, dan weer bijstellingen. Ook het Aangepast schattingsbesluit [WAO-herkeuringen] verandert steeds. Zo gaat het de hele tijd. Ik voel wat dat betreft met de politiek weinig verbondenheid ... Vaak zijn het zaken die nog niet goed doordacht zijn, die meteen moeten worden uitgevoerd. En daar komen naderhand altijd reparaties."*

De derde en laatste oorzaak op het gebied van context is de organisatiecontext. Implementeren van nieuw beleid gebeurt binnen organisaties, wat betekent dat de organisatiecontext de ervaringen van professionals met het beleid zeker kan beïnvloeden. We vonden hier bijvoorbeeld dat, als organisaties veel NPM-kenmerken bezaten, zoals een focus op aantallen en op economische waarden zoals efficiëntie, dit de mate van beleidsvervreemding bij professionals kon verhogen.

Naast de organisatiecontext bleek de beleidsinhoud ook zeer relevant te zijn voor het verklaren van de mate van beleidsvervreemding. Ten eerste de doelen van het beleid. Economische doelen zoals efficiëntie werden minder gewaardeerd dan kwaliteitsdoelen, zoals het verhogen van de onderwijskwaliteit. Naast de doelen van het beleid bleek de inhoud van het beleid van invloed op de mate van beleidsvervreemding. Wanneer de beleidsregels bijvoorbeeld erg strikt waren, kon dit de mate van beleidsvervreemding verhogen.

3 – Een meetinstrument van beleidsvervreemding, bestaande uit 26 items

Hoofdstuk 5 behandelt de derde onderzoeksvraag: "Hoe kan beleidsvervreemding worden gemeten?". Dit hoofdstuk gebruikt hiervoor de casus van de invoering van DBC's in de geestelijke gezondheidszorg. Op basis van schaalontwikkelingsmethoden (DeVellis, 2003) en een vragenlijst uitgezet onder 478 psychologen, psychiaters en psychotherapeuten hebben we een meetinstrument van beleidsvervreemding ontwikkeld. Dit meetinstrument bestond eerst uit 23 stellingen (items). In een tweede onderzoek onder 1.317 psychologen, psychiaters en psychotherapeuten (Hoofdstuk 7 en 8), hebben we

dit meetinstrument getest. Voor de schaal strategische machteloosheid hebben we 3 extra items ontwikkeld, omdat deze schaal zeer compact was. Tot slot hebben we het verbeterde meetinstrument met deze 26 items getest bij een ander beleid in een andere context, namelijk de invoering van de 20-weken echo (Structureel Echoscopisch Onderzoek, SEO) bij verloskundigen (Hoofdstuk 9). Hier bleek het meetinstrument goed te werken. Concluderend, op basis van theoretische en empirische analyses hebben we een meetinstrument voor beleidsvervreemding ontwikkeld, bestaande uit 26 items. Dit meetinstrument is hieronder weergegeven. Voor een stappenplan om het te gebruiken, wordt verwezen naar Appendix 1.

Tabel 2 Meetinstrument voor beleidsvervreemding

Meetinstrument voor beleidsvervreemding
Strategische machteloosheid
1. Professionals hadden volgens mij veel te weinig macht om het beleid te beïnvloeden
2. Wij als professionals stonden compleet machteloos bij de invoering van het beleid
3. De professionals konden de ontwikkeling van het beleid op nationaal niveau (Minister, Ministerie, Tweede Kamer) helemaal niet beïnvloeden
4. Op landelijk niveau konden de professionals meebeslissen hoe het beleid werd opgezet (R)
5. Professionals hebben, via hun professionele verenigingen, actief meegedacht over de opzet van het beleid (R)
6. Politici hebben bij de opzet van het beleid helemaal niet geluisterd naar de professionals
Tactische machteloosheid
7. In mijn organisatie konden vooral professionals bepalen hoe het beleid werd uitgewerkt (R)
8. In mijn organisatie hebben professionals, via werkgroepen of vergaderingen, meebeslist over de uitwerking van het beleid (R)
9. Het management van mijn organisatie had de professionals veel meer moeten betrekken bij de uitwerking van het beleid
10. Bij de invoering van het beleid werd er in mijn organisatie helemaal niet naar de professionals geluisterd
11. In mijn organisatie konden professionals meepraten over de uitwerking van het beleid (R)
12. Ik en mijn collega professionals stonden compleet machteloos bij de invoering van het beleid in mijn organisatie
Operationele machteloosheid
13. Ik heb vrijheid om te bepalen hoe ik met het beleid omga (R)
14. Bij het werken met het beleid kan ik goed aansluiten op de behoeften van de cliënt (R)
15. Werken met het beleid voelt als een harnas waarin ik me niet goed kan bewegen
16. Als ik met het beleid werk moet ik me aan strakke procedures houden
17. Bij het werken met het beleid kan ik veel te weinig maatwerk voor mijn cliënten leveren
18. Bij het werken met het beleid kan ik mijn eigen afwegingen maken (R)
Zinloosheid voor de samenleving
19. Ik denk dat het beleid op de lange termijn leidt tot doel 1 (R)
20. Ik denk dat het beleid op de korte termijn leidt doel 1 (R)
21. Ik vind dat het beleid nu al heeft geleid tot doel 1 (R)
22. Alles bij elkaar genomen denk ik dat het beleid leidt tot doel 1 (R)
Zinloosheid voor de cliënten
23. Dankzij het beleid kan ik de problemen van mijn cliënten beter oplossen (R)
24. Het beleid is bevorderlijk voor het welzijn van mijn cliënten (R)
25. Het beleid zorgt ervoor dat ik cliënten efficiënter kan helpen dan hiervoor (R)
26. Ik denk dat het beleid uiteindelijk goed is voor mijn cliënten (R)
Sjablonen zijn onderstreept. Deze kunnen vervangen worden voor woorden die passen bij de specifieke casus.

4 – Beleidsvervreemding beïnvloedt bereidheid invoering beleid, actieve steun voor beleid en arbeidstevredenheid

De laatste onderzoeksvraag richt zich op de effecten van beleidsvervreemding. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat beleidsvervreemding drie belangrijke effecten heeft: minder bereidheid (meer weerstand) om het beleid in te voeren, minder steun voor het beleid en minder arbeidstevredenheid.

De invloed van beleidsvervreemding op de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren is beschreven in **Hoofdstuk 6** en **Hoofdstuk 8**. Verandermanagers stellen dat voldoende bereidheid van de medewerkers om een verandering in te voeren een belangrijke voorwaarde is voor het succes van deze verandering (Carnall, 2007; Higgs & Rowland, 2005; Judson, 1991). Gebaseerd op verandermanagement- en bestuurskundige literatuur hebben we een model opgesteld dat de vijf dimensies van beleidsvervreemding linkt aan de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren. Dit model is getest via een vragenlijst onder 478 psychologen, psychotherapeuten en psychiaters die DBC's invoeren. De dimensies van beleidsvervreemding, samen met standaard controlevariabelen, verklaarden meer dan 40% van de variantie van de bereidheid om het beleid in te voeren verklaarde. Beleidsvervreemding heeft dus een grote invloed op de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren (veranderbereidheid).

Drie van de vijf dimensies van beleidsvervreemding waren vooral belangrijk bij het verklaren van de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren. Ten eerste de zinvolheid van het beleid voor de samenleving. Als zorgprofessionals het gevoel hadden dat het beleid haar doelen (hier efficiëntie en transparantie) niet bereikte, dan waren ze veel minder bereid om het beleid in te voeren. Ten tweede, als professionals het gevoel hadden dat het DBC-beleid niet goed was voor hun eigen cliënten (zinloosheid voor cliënten), daalde hun bereidheid om het beleid in te voeren opnieuw. Tot slot bleek dat, hoe minder autonomie de zorgprofessionals ervaarden bij de beleidsuitvoering (operationele machteloosheid), hoe minder bereid ze waren om het beleid in te voeren.

Ten tweede hebben we gekeken naar de actieve steun voor het beleid (behavioral support for the change). Dit is onderzocht via een casus van verloskundigen die de 20-weken echo uitvoerden en beschreven in **Hoofdstuk 9**. Actieve steun voor een verandering (hier: voor een beleid) gaat over de acties van medewerkers om een verandering te steunen of juist te saboteren (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002). Professionals kunnen bijvoorbeeld meer doen dan formeel van ze verwacht wordt. Ze kunnen er zo voor proberen te zorgen dat het beleid een succes wordt. Ze maken bijvoorbeeld collega's enthousiast en nemen plaats in werkgroepen. Dit noemen we 'championing'. Aan de andere kant van het continuüm vinden we actieve weerstand. Professionals kunnen

weerstand vertonen tegen een bepaald beleid, door acties te ondernemen die tot doel hebben om het beleid te laten mislukken, zoals demonstraties of zelfs sabotage.

Op basis van onze analyses concluderen we dat, hoe meer professionals beleidsvervreemding ervaren, hoe minder actieve steun ze geven aan het beleid. Net als bij de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren, vonden we dat de mate van zinloosheid belangrijker was voor het verklaren van actieve steun, dan de mate van machteloosheid.

Tot slot hebben we gekeken naar een belangrijk effect op baanniveau, namelijk arbeidstevredenheid. In **Hoofdstuk 7** is de relatie tussen beleidsver-vreemding en arbeidstevredenheid onderzocht. Twee dimensies van beleidsvervreemding (operationele en tactische machteloosheid) hadden een significant negatieve invloed op arbeidstevredenheid. Met andere woorden, als professionals het gevoel hebben dat ze geen autonomie hebben tijdens de uitvoering van beleid, vermindert dit hun arbeidstevredenheid. Wanneer ze het gevoel hadden dat ze weinig invloed hadden op de manier waarop hun organisatie het beleid invoerde, zorgde dit er ook voor dat ze minder tevreden waren met hun baan.

Zes belangrijke conclusies en bijbehorende aanbevelingen

Na het beantwoorden van de vier onderzoeksvragen kunnen we een aantal conclusies trekken. We gaven al aan dat deze studie interdisciplinair is. De conclusies bevinden zich dan ook op verschillende onderzoeksterreinen, maar de belangrijkste conclusies liggen vooral op de terreinen publiek management en beleidsimplementatie.

Conclusie 1 – NPM is invloedrijk, maar een bredere kijk is nodig

In het proefschrift gaven we aan dat veel professionals problemen hebben met nieuw NPM-beleid, dat zich vaak richt op economische waarden zoals efficiëntie. Deze waarden kunnen belangrijker worden dan professionele waarden, zoals de beste zorg leveren voor de patiënt. Bij de empirische analyses vonden we inderdaad dat NPM kenmerken de mate van beleidsvervreemding beïnvloedden. Bijvoorbeeld, hoe meer het management een beleid concretiseert door zich te richten op prestatiemeting en kwantitatieve output, hoe meer de professionals beleidsvervreemding ervaren.

Maar we moeten hierbij opmerken dat NPM een zeer breed concept is, en dat er onduidelijkheid is wat NPM precies is (Hood & Peters, 2004:268). Verder zijn de kenmerken van NPM met elkaar in tegenspraak. Dit komt omdat deze kenmerken voortkomen uit twee verschillende onderzoeksstromingen, het 'business managerialisme' en de 'public choice' benadering (Hood, 1991). Maar

zelfs als we proberen om NPM te definiëren, bijvoorbeeld via de zeven componenten van Hood (1991), merken we dat er ook andere oorzaken zijn die de mate van beleidsvervreemding beïnvloeden. De status van de professie en de kracht van de professionele vereniging beïnvloedt bijvoorbeeld de mate van beleidsvervreemding. Dit betekent dat NPM niet de enige factor is die beleidsvervreemding beïnvloedt. Ten tweede vonden we dat de invloed vanuit NPM verschilt, door de rol die publieke managers spelen. Sommige verzekeringsartsen gaven bijvoorbeeld aan dat ze effectief konden omgaan met de hogere prestatiedruk door intensief te communiceren met hun manager. Op deze manier kunnen publieke managers een buffer vormen voor strikte prestatiecriteria. Concluderend kunnen we stellen dat, hoewel NPM een belangrijke factor is voor het verklaren van de houding van professionals tegenover beleid, er een bredere kijk nodig is om deze houdingen van professionals goed te begrijpen.

Voor onderzoekers lijkt deze conclusie de stelling te falsifiëren dat NPM de belangrijkste en misschien enige factor is die druk zet op professionals tijdens beleidsuitvoering (Emery & Giauque, 2003; J. Peters & Pouw, 2005). Onze empirische analyses zijn meer in lijn met die van andere auteurs (Exworthy & Halford, 1998; Kirkpatrick et al., 2005; Leicht & Fennell, 2001; Noordegraaf, 2007; Noordegraaf, 2008). Deze laatste groep auteurs geeft aan dat we moeten kijken naar verschillende ontwikkelingen in publiek management, zoals het mondiger worden van burgers, de introductie van nieuwe technologieën en de veranderende wensen van politici en beleidsmakers. Wij kunnen een aantal andere factoren aan deze lijst toevoegen, zoals de politieke en professionele context van beleidsimplementatie (zie Figuur 10.1).

We bevelen publieke managers, professionals en beleidsmakers ook aan om breder te kijken. Naast NPM zullen zij de professionele en politieke context en de beleidsdoelen en de beleidsregels moeten bestuderen. Beleidsmakers kunnen er bijvoorbeeld voor kiezen om professionele verenigingen intensiever te betrekken, of om de discretie bij beleidsuitvoering te handhaven, zodat professionals het beleid goed kunnen toepassen op specifieke gevallen. Ten slotte vonden we dat het introduceren van veel verschillende beleidsregels de mate van beleidsvervreemding verhoogd. Professionals hebben het gevoel dat al deze beleidsveranderingen niet veel waarde toevoegen. Dit heeft een sterke relatie met het begrip 'verandermoeheid' (Judson, 1991). We adviseren beleidsmakers dan ook om het aantal beleidsveranderingen te beperken, in lijn met de aanbevelingen van de Commissie Dijsselbloem (Parliamentary Commission Education Reforms, 2008b).

Conclusie 2 – Discretie blijft cruciaal

Een van de dimensies van beleidsvervreemding is operationele machteloosheid, de mate van gepercipieerde invloed van professionals op de manier waarop zij zelf het beleid uitvoeren. De bestuurskunde beschrijft dit vooral in termen van de discretie die een werknemer heeft om beleid te implementeren. Dit heeft een sterke relatie met het begrip autonomie.

De mate van discretie beïnvloedt in sterke mate de bereidheid om het beleid in te voeren en de arbeidstevredenheid van professionals. Bij de DBC-regelgeving is – volgens de professionals – de mate van discretie laag. Weinig discretie bij het uitvoeren van beleid maakt het moeilijker om de behandeling aan te passen aan de specifieke behoeften van de patiënt. Een zorgprofessional verwoordt het als volgt (open antwoord uit vragenlijst, zie Hoofdstuk 7):

> *"DBC's dicteren een bepaalde visie op patiënten. Ze krijgen een etiket vanuit een classificatiesysteem dat daar niet voor bedoeld is. [...] Soms past iemand in een 'depressie' maar heeft hij/zij toch echt iets anders nodig dan dat keurig cognitief gedragstherapie protocol van 10 sessies. Als tijd en aantal sessies gaat dicteren in plaats van inhoud, kun je geen maatwerk meer leveren."*

Uit de analyses in Hoofdstuk 8 blijkt dat meer discretie positief van invloed is op de arbeidstevredenheid van professionals. Al met al, als professionals het gevoel hebben dat ze vrijheid hebben in de manier waarop zij beleid uitvoeren, heeft dit een positieve invloed op de bereidheid om dit beleid in te voeren en op hun arbeidstevredenheid.

Deze conclusie laat zien dat discretie cruciaal blijft tijdens beleidsimplementatie, zeker als het gaat om professionals (Elmore, 1985; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Lipsky, 1980). Veel discretie kan de beleidsprestaties bevorderen, omdat professionals de mogelijkheid hebben om het beleid aan te passen op de specifieke situatie van hun cliënten (Hill & Hupe, 2009:52, zie ook Lipsky, 1980).

Een aanbeveling voor beleidsmakers en publieke managers is dat zij voorzichtig moeten zijn met het verminderen van de discretie van professionals. We zeggen daarmee echter niet dat de discretie van professionals nooit moeten worden aangepakt. Het heeft namelijk ook nadelen, zoals inefficiëntie, het bouwen van eigen koninkrijkjes en mogelijk zelfs sabotage van beleid (Deakin, 1994; Lipsky, 1980). Het bepalen van de mate van discretie moet een weloverwogen keuze zijn, waarbij de mogelijke kansen en gevaren in acht worden genomen.

Conclusie 3 – Publieke professionals zijn niet tegen economische doelen

De derde conclusie gaat in op de houding van professionals tegenover economische doelen, zoals efficiëntie en financiële transparantie. De DBC-regelgeving had vooral economische doelen, namelijk efficiëntie, transparantie en keuzevrijheid voor cliënten. De zorgprofessionals die we hebben onderzocht (in totaal meer dan 1.700) onderschreven deze doelstellingen over het algemeen. Zo is 85 procent van de zorgprofessionals het (zeer) eens met de stelling "Ik vind het bevorderen van transparantie in de zorgkosten en zorgkwaliteit een heel goed doel". Ook onderschrijven zorgprofessionals de doelstellingen op het gebied van efficiëntie (75 procent eens of zeer eens) en keuzemogelijkheden voor patiënten (88 procent).

Hoewel de professionals het eens zijn met de doelen van dit beleid, denken ze niet het middel (het DBC-beleid zelf) deze doelen bereikt. Dit blijkt één van de belangrijkste redenen waarom zij zo fel ageren tegen dit beleid. Zo stelt een zorgprofessional (open antwoord uit vragenlijst):

> *"De doelen van de DBC's kan ik onderschrijven, de uitvoering niet. In een optimistische bui denk ik dat dit het begin is van een verbetering. Een wat rommelig en onaangenaam begin, maar ik vertrouw op de dynamiek van veranderingen. In een pessimistische bui denk ik wel eens dat veel mensen binnen de GGZ zo gedemoraliseerd zijn geworden dat dit gehannes met DBC's de nekslag kan zijn voor de GGZ als geheel."*

Veel zorgprofessionals delen dit gevoel. Op een schaal van 1-10 scoorden het 'eens zijn met de doelen' redelijk hoog (7,8 voor transparantie, 8,1 voor efficiëntie, 8,1 voor keuzemogelijkheden). Maar op de vraag: 'Bevordert het middel (DBC-regelgeving) het doel?', werd veel minder positief geantwoord: 3,6 voor transparantie, 3,4 voor efficiëntie, 2,9 voor keuzemogelijkheden.

Op basis hiervan kunnen we zeggen dat professionals niet per definitie tegen economische doelen zijn. Dit is een interessante bevinding, omdat het tegen een aantal onderzoeken in de bestuurskunde ingaat. Sommige auteurs geven hier aan dat economische doelen niet worden gewaardeerd door professionals (Emery & Giauque, 2003; Van den Brink et al., 2006). Maar het lijkt een misvatting dat publieke professionals de waarde van economische doelen (zoals efficiëntie) niet onderkennen. Hun weerstand komt juist voort uit hun ervaring dat het middel (het beleid) deze doelen niet bereikt.

Op basis hiervan adviseren we onderzoekers op het gebied van beleidsimplementatie en verandermanagement zich meer bezig te houden met

de inhoud van de verandering. Een voorbeeld als de DBC-regelgeving kan dit verduidelijken. Het DBC-beleid is zo gestructureerd dat het perverse financiële prikkels stimuleerde. Zo is er een DBC voor een persoonlijkheidsstoornis van 800 minuten (13 uur) tot 1.800 minuten (30 uur). De behandeling levert de zorgprofessional evenveel op bij 13 uur zorg, als wanneer hij 30 uur levert. Dat is een prikkel om te stoppen bij 13 uur, en werkt kostenverhogend. De grove tijdsindeling maakt het ook aantrekkelijk om net op een hogere categorie uit te komen. Zowel voor- als tegenstanders van de DBC-regelgeving erkennen dit probleem. Dit maakt het erg moeilijk om een van de doelen (efficiëntie) te bereiken.

Op dit moment nemen veel onderzoekers (bijvoorbeeld op het gebied van verandermanagement) de inhoud van een verandering niet mee. Ze richten zich alleen op de processen (zoals communicatie, training, participatie) om een verandering te bewerkstelligen (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Holt et al., 2006). Maar het lijkt erop dat dit in sommige gevallen onvoldoende is om het succes (of het falen) van een verandering te verklaren. We adviseren dat vervolgonderzoek de inhoud van een beleid of verandering expliciet meeneemt.

Deze conclusie heeft ook impact voor beleidsmakers, managers en professionals. Ten eerste laat het zien dat economische doelen zoals efficiëntie en het verhogen van de keuzemogelijkheden voor cliënten waardevolle doelen zijn, ook volgens professionals. Beleidsmakers en verandermanagers hoeven deze doelen dan ook niet te verbergen. Ze kunnen professionals vragen om te helpen met beleidsontwikkeling om deze doelen te bereiken. Ten tweede laat deze conclusie zien hoe belangrijk het is voor beleidsmakers en verandermanagers om de inhoud van een verandering te begrijpen, en het gedrag van professionals dat hiermee samenhangt. Het verdient aanbeveling om hier vroeg in de beleidsontwikkeling aandacht aan te besteden. Een manier is om scenario's of pilots te ontwikkelen om de mogelijke gedragingen van professionals te voorspellen. Het beleid geeft bepaalde prikkelingen (incentives), en door middel van pilots of scenarioanalyses kan worden onderzocht hoe professionals op deze prikkelingen reageren. Op basis hiervan kunnen beleidsmakers en verandermanagers het beleid aanpassen, zodat het gedrag meer overeenkomt met de beleidsdoelstellingen. Op dit moment gebeurt dit vaak pas achteraf, bijvoorbeeld een jaar nadat het beleid is ingevoerd.

Conclusie 4 – Richt je op het verhogen van zinvolheid, niet op verhogen van invloed en participatie

In de beleidsimplementatie-, verandermanagement en algemene HRM-literatuur is er veel aandacht voor participatie en invloed van medewerkers. In deze studie hebben we onderzocht wat de effecten zijn van machteloosheid (het

omgekeerde van invloed) en zinloosheid, op zowel het beleidsniveau als het werkniveau.

De empirie laat zien dat de effecten van zinloosheid van beleid voor de samenleving of voor de cliënt sterker zijn dan die van strategische of tactische machteloosheid. De bereidheid om een beleid in te voeren is bijvoorbeeld afhankelijker van de mate van ervaren zinloosheid van het beleid, dan de mate van invloed op strategisch of tactisch niveau. Dit betekent dat het voor publieke professionals belangrijker is om de 'zin' (de waarde) van een nieuw beleid te zien, dan om het gevoel te hebben dat ze invloed hebben gehad op de ontwikkeling van dit beleid. Hiernaast vonden we dat indicatoren op baanniveau (zoals inzet en verloopgeneigdheid), sterker gerelateerd waren aan ervaren zinloosheid op het werk dan aan ervaren machteloosheid op het werk.

Op basis van de resultaten van onze studie willen we de 'invloed van invloed' op strategisch of tactisch niveau nuanceren (discretie, echter, blijft cruciaal, zie conclusie 2). We adviseren om in onderzoek juist meer aandacht te besteden aan de dimensie 'zinloosheid'. Een onderzoeksagenda kan zich bijvoorbeeld op twee niveaus focussen. Het eerste niveau richt zich op een specifiek aspect van het werk, zoals een nieuw beleid, een nieuw ICT-systeem, een organisatieregel of een organisatieverandering. Het tweede niveau richt zich juist op het meer algemene, baanniveau. Hoe zinvol vinden professionals hun werk? Welke effecten heeft dit voor zowel organisatie als medewerker?

Ook mensen uit het veld adviseren we om meer aandacht te geven aan de ervaren zinloosheid van het werk of van een bepaald onderdeel van het werk. Het lijkt erop dat een exclusieve focus op participatie of invloed ineffectief is. Als je professionals vraagt om te participeren in een beleid dat al redelijk vaststaat, heeft dit niet veel zin. Wanneer participatie als interventie wordt gebruikt, moet het een middel zijn om de zinvolheid van een beleid te verhogen. Het is geen doel op zichzelf.

Conclusie 5 – Beleidsinhoud, organisatiecontext en persoonlijkheidskenmerken zijn belangrijk

In hoofdstuk 7 hebben we gekeken waarom professionals bereid zijn (of juist weerstand vertonen) om beleid in te voeren. Als mogelijke oorzaken namen we drie groepen indicatoren mee: De beleidsinhoud (wat is het beleid?), de organisatiecontext (waar wordt het ingevoerd?) en de persoonlijkheidskenmerken (wie voert het in?). Deze drie groepen indicatoren blijken alle invloed te hebben op de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren. De dimensies van beleidsvervreemding (die vielen onder beleidsinhoud en organisatiecontext) zijn het belangrijkst. Dit betekent dat andere indicatoren –

naast beleidsvervreemding – de bereidheid om met beleid te werken beïnvloeden, maar in mindere mate.

We adviseren om in onderzoek meerdere indicatoren mee te nemen bij het verklaren van de bereidheid (of weerstand) om beleid in te voeren. Een interdisciplinaire aanpak kan hier goed werken, waarbij bijvoorbeeld de onderzoeksterreinen organisatiewetenschappen (waar?), arbeids- en organisatiepsychologie (wie?), verandermanagement (hoe?) en beleidsimplementatie (wat?) worden geïntegreerd. Zo kan een meer compleet beeld worden geschetst over de redenen voor weerstand tegen bepaald beleid.

Voor beleidsmakers, managers en professionals betekent dit dat er meerdere redenen zijn voor weerstand of de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren. Maar er is ook een meer praktische implicatie. Uit ons onderzoek blijkt namelijk dat de belangrijkste oorzaken voor bereidheid de beleidsinhoud (wat) is. Als professionals zien dat het beleid waarde toevoegt, zijn ze zeer bereid om hieraan mee te werken. De organisatiecontext en persoonlijkheidskenmerken zijn veel minder belangrijk. Mensen uit het veld moeten dan ook eerst onderzoeken welke onderdelen van het beleid ervoor zorgen dat professionals voor of juist tegen een verandering zijn. Dan pas moeten ze kijken naar de organisatiecontext waarin professionals werken. Worden er bijvoorbeeld veel politieke spelletjes gespeeld in een organisatie, en hoe staan collega's van de professionals tegenover het nieuwe beleid? Persoonlijkheidskenmerken blijken het minst van invloed op de bereidheid om met een nieuw beleid te werken. Ze voegen maar 2% verklaarde variantie toe (zie Hoofdstuk 7). Het lijkt er daarmee op dat weerstand niet komt door persoonlijkheidskenmerken. Dit is goed nieuws voor beleidsmakers, publieke managers en verandermanagers die ervoor willen zorgen dat een nieuw beleid geaccepteerd wordt door de professionals op de werkvloer.

Conclusie 6 – Raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding werkt adequaat

Onze laatste – en centrale – conclusie gaat over het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding. In het begin van dit proefschrift hebben we een historisch overzicht gegeven van het concept beleidsvervreemding. Hierna bediscussieerden we recentere literatuur over vervreemding, en combineerden we dit met bestuurskundige literatuur om een raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding te ontwikkelen. Dit raamwerk hebben we in dit proefschrift getest in vier casestudies:

1. Verzekeringsartsen en arbeidsdeskundigen met als beleid de WAO-kerheuringen

2. Middelbare schooldocenten met als beleid de invoering van de Tweede Fase
3. Psychologen, psychiaters en psychotherapeuten met als beleid de DBC-regelgeving
4. Verloskundigen met als beleid de twintig-weken echo

Na twee kwalitatieve studies hebben we via een grootschalig survey een meetinstrument van beleidsvervreemding ontwikkeld. Hiervoor hebben we de stappen van schaalontwikkeling van DeVellis (2003) gevolgd. Hierna hebben we dit meetinstrument getest en versterkt via een extra grootschalig onderzoek. Tot slot hebben we dit meetinstrument getest in een andere context met een ander beleid. Op basis hiervan hebben we een betrouwbaar en valide instrument ontwikkeld van 26 items om beleidsvervreemding te meten (zie Appendix 1).

Het meetinstrument is gebruikt om drie belangrijke effecten van beleidsvervreemding te onderzoeken. Op beleidsniveau blijkt dat de dimensies van beleidsvervreemding de bereidheid om beleid in te voeren negatief beïnvloeden. Ook blijkt dat, hoe meer beleidsvervreemding, hoe minder actieve steun de professionals geven aan het beleid. Deze invloeden zijn zeer sterk, wat de praktische toepasbaarheid van het meetinstrument vergroot. Tot slot blijkt dat de mate van beleidsvervreemding (specifiek de dimensie machteloosheid) negatief is voor de arbeidstevredenheid van professionals. Tot slot hebben we laten zien dat beleidsvervreemding zowel theoretisch als empirisch verschilt van werkvervreemding. Op basis van deze analyses kunnen we concluderen dat het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding adequaat werkt. We hopen daarom dat zowel wetenschappers als professionals in het veld het raamwerk van beleidsvervreemding zullen gebruiken bij komend onderzoek.

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APPENDICES

1

How can I use the policy alienation framework in research, in consultancy or as a practitioner? Five basic steps

1.1 INTRODUCING THE HOW-TO GUIDE FOR SCHOLARS, CONSULTANTS, AND OTHER PRACTITIONERS

In this appendix, we will demonstrate how the policy alienation framework can be used by scholars, consultants, and other practitioners, thereby increasing its practical applicability. Before we start, we should note that this 'how-to guide' should be viewed critically for each specific situation, as each is likely to have its own peculiarities, for example in terms of organizational context, the type of professionals doing the implementing, and in which phase of the policy implementation one is wanting to use the policy alienation framework. We hope that it will prove a useful tool for scholars, consultants, and other practitioners who want to increase their understanding of how professionals experience changes such as a new policy.

1.2 STEP 1 – UNDERSTAND THE POLICY ALIENATION FRAMEWORK

First of all, a basic understanding of the policy alienation framework is required. A good reading of Chapter 1 can provide such an understanding. Policy alienation is defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection, from the policy program to be implemented, by a public professional who, on a regular basis, interacts directly with clients. We conceptualized our policy alienation framework based on theoretical insights from the work alienation and public administration literature streams, and explored and tested this framework in a number of empirical analyses. Based on this, we constructed a definitive theoretical framework for policy alienation, consisting of two dimensions and five sub-dimensions, as shown in Figure A1.1 below:
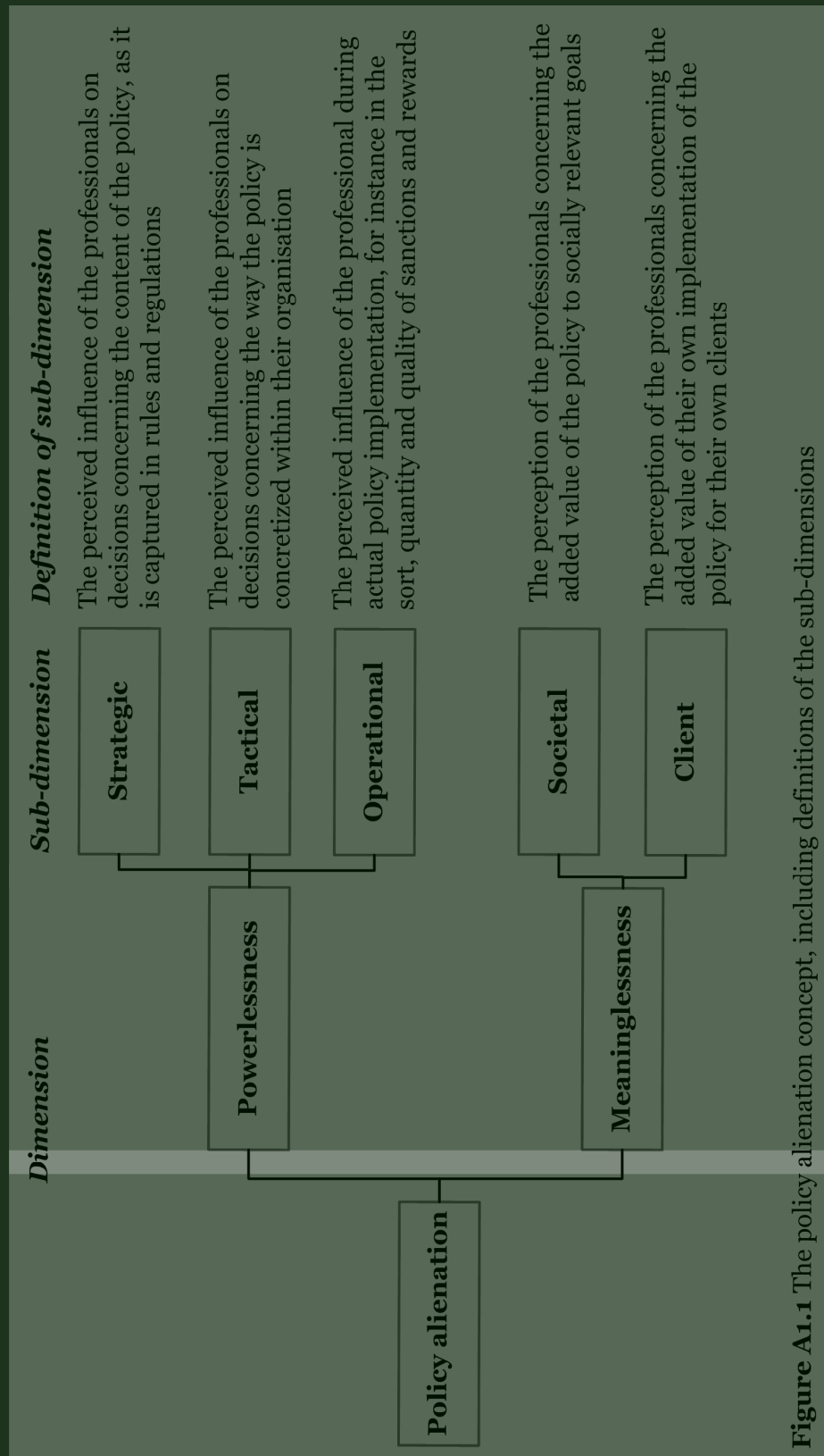
Figure A1.1 The policy alienation concept, including definitions of the sub-dimensions

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Definition of sub-dimension
Policy alienation		
Powerlessness	Strategic	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the content of the policy, as it is captured in rules and regulations
	Tactical	The perceived influence of the professionals on decisions concerning the way the policy is concretized within their organisation
	Operational	The perceived influence of the professional during actual policy implementation, for instance in the sort, quantity and quality of sanctions and rewards
Meaninglessness	Societal	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of the policy to socially relevant goals
	Client	The perception of the professionals concerning the added value of their own implementation of the policy for their own clients

1.3 STEP 2 – ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR CASE FIT THE POLICY ALIENATION FRAMEWORK

Once you have a basic understanding of the policy alienation framework, you should examine the extent to which the policy and its implementers fit the criteria needed to use the policy alienation framework. If the fit is not perfect, you can consider thoughtfully adapting the policy alienation framework so that it better fits your situation. We would advise you to discuss the adapted policy alienation framework with some policy alienation experts, and also experts from the case you wish to study (see also Step 4). For example, if you want to analyze a specific change (such as a new IT system or a merger) in a private organization, you should first analyze and discuss the policy alienation framework with numerous experts to ensure that it fits the case in hand.

Criterion 1 – Is the policy captured in national rules or regulations?

The first criterion is that the policy should be captured in *national* rules and regulations. A number of sub-dimensions of policy alienation explicitly focus on the national level. For instance, strategic powerlessness examines the professionals' perceived degree of influence concerning the content of the policy, as this is captured in national rules and regulations.

Criterion 2 – Is the policy being implemented by public professionals?

The second criterion is that the implementers of the policy should be public professionals. Gabe, Bury, and Elston (2004:163) note that: "to describe an occupation as a 'profession' may be simply to identify it as a particular kind of occupation, typically one with high status and high rewards, requiring long formal training and delivering a personal service" (see Section 1.2). Public professionals by definition work in the public sector, which can be broadly defined as "those parts of the economy that are either in state ownership or under contract to the state, plus those parts that are regulated and/or subsidized in the public interest" (Flynn, 2007:2). This definition covers physicians, teachers, and judges; and the policy alienation framework is tailored towards such public professionals. For example, the sub-dimension of operational powerlessness (discretion) looks at the perceived degree of freedom in making choices concerning the type, quantity, and quality of sanctions and rewards on offer when implementing a policy. While this is an important topic for public professionals, it is less so for other workers such as cashiers and desk officers. Further, the professionals should be public professionals since the sub-dimension of societal meaninglessness examines the value added by the policy

to socially relevant goals. This is more relevant for public professionals such as physicians and teachers than for, say, lawyers or notaries.

Criterion 3 – Can the policy be clearly distinguished from other policies?

To measure the degree of policy alienation, the influencing factors, and the onward effects properly, it is essential that the policy can be clearly distinguished from other policies. This is one reason why, in our case studies, we chose to examine Diagnosis Related Groups in mental healthcare rather than, for example, the new Health Insurance Law (Zorgverzekeringswet). The Health Insurance Law was very widespread and interconnected with other laws, and it would therefore have been much harder for both ourselves and the involved professionals to distinguish which aspects were truly part of it.

Criterion 4 – Do the implementing public professionals have opinions regarding the policy?

The fourth and final criterion is that the public professionals targeted should have opinions regarding the policy. For this to happen, a policy needs to substantially influence the public professional, whether in positive, negative, or other ways. If a policy is insignificant for the professionals, and the professionals consequently do not have any opinions regarding this policy, it becomes meaningless to try to determine the level of alienation towards this policy.

1.4 Step 3 – Identify your goal in using the policy alienation framework

Once you are convinced that you can use the policy alienation framework in your situation, and you have adapted the framework if required to fit your situation, you should ask yourself why the policy alienation framework is to be used. Possible reasons for using the policy alienation framework in the scientific community are:

1. To develop theoretical insights by examining the relationship of policy alienation with another concepts, such as resistance to change, professionalism, professional values, Public Service Motivation, or vitality
2. To enhance the empirical understanding of a situation by studying a particular policy in a particular context

3. To develop methodological insights by using confirmatory factor analysis with data obtained through the policy alienation framework in a new context
4. To develop methodological insights by examining the discriminant and convergent validities of the policy alienation framework
5. To compare the extent of policy alienation across different policy fields, professions, or countries

Some further possibilities for using the policy alienation framework in practice include:

1. To measure the reasons why professionals are against a specific policy (or a change), and use these insights to develop interventions for decreasing this resistance
2. To measure the reasons why professionals are against a specific policy, and then use these insights to strengthen and alter the design of a policy (for instance in a pilot project)
3. To examine the way a particular change in policy affects the attitudes of professionals towards the policy (a 'before and after' comparison)
4. To measure the attitudes of professionals to a particular policy, and use the insights to nuance or change existing opinions in the political or organizational debate
5. To benchmark organizations based on the degree of policy alienation found and develop corresponding 'good-practices'

The reasons for deciding to use the policy alienation framework should guide the timing of when you employ it (for instance at the beginning or at the end of the policy implementation process). Further, this will influence the choice of an appropriate method as discussed in the next step.

1.5 Step 4 – Choose your method and discuss it with a number of experts

Based on your goal, you have to decide which method is best suited to achieving it. For instance, if you wanted to benchmark organizations based on the degree of policy alienation, a survey would be appropriate. On the other hand, if you want to derive a deep understanding of a particular policy in a particular context, a document analysis coupled with interviews and group discussions may be more appropriate.

Interview protocols have been prepared for *qualitative* methods such as interviewing or group discussions. If you apply a *quantitative* method, you can

use the validated scales for policy alienation dimensions. A Dutch version of the validated scales can be found in the Dutch summary. The interview protocol and the validated scales are shown below (in English).

The policy alienation framework is a general framework that can be used in different contexts, such as a new national policy to be implemented by Canadian nurses or a new European policy concerning modified peer-reviewing guidelines to be implemented by European academics. Given that every situation is to some extent unique, we would urge you to discuss any developed interview protocol or questionnaire with several experts in the field. We would also advise you to contact policy alienation experts to discuss the decisions you have made. This will increase the reliability and validity of your study.

If you have chosen to conduct survey research, you should start by entering the template forms of the policy alienation items in your survey document. Templates allow you to specify an item by replacing the original general phrases with more specific ones that better fit your research context. This makes it easier for the respondents to understand items, as they are better tailored to their context, and this, in turn, increases reliability and content validity. An example of how this works is shown in 1.5.1 below. You should also check whether the template items you use in the questionnaire are appropriate for the given field by interviewing a number of field experts, as otherwise you might not achieve any increase in reliability and validity.

1.5.1 Quantitative analyses: Policy alienation measurement instrument

Based on the scale-development steps described in this thesis, a final version of the policy alienation measurement instrument, consisting of 26-items, was constructed. This measurement instrument is shown in Table A1.1.

Table A1.1 Items in the policy alienation measurement instrument

Policy alienation measurement instrument
Strategic powerlessness

1. In my opinion, <u>professionals</u> had too little power to influence the <u>policy</u>

2. We <u>professionals</u> were completely powerless during the introduction of the <u>policy</u>

3. <u>Professionals</u> could not at all influence the development of the <u>policy</u> at the national level (Minister and Ministry of <u>X</u>, National Government)

4. On a national level, <u>professionals</u> could influence how the <u>policy</u> was set up (R)

5. <u>Professionals</u>, through their professional associations, actively helped to think with the design of the <u>policy</u> (R)

6. Politicians did not, during the design of the policy, listen to the <u>professionals</u> at all

Tactical powerlessness

7. In my <u>organization</u>, especially <u>professionals</u> could decide how the <u>policy</u> was implemented (R)

8. In my <u>organization</u>, <u>professionals</u> have, through working groups or meetings, taken part in decisions over the execution of the <u>policy</u> (R)

9. The management of my <u>organization</u> should have involved the <u>professionals</u> far more in the execution of the <u>policy</u>

10. <u>Professionals</u> were not listened to about the introduction of the <u>policy</u> in my <u>organization</u>

11. In my <u>organization,</u> <u>professionals</u> could take part in discussions regarding the execution of the <u>policy</u> (R)

12. I and my fellow <u>professionals</u> were completely powerless in the introduction of the <u>policy</u> in my <u>organization</u>

Operational powerlessness

13. I have freedom to decide how to use the <u>policy</u> (R)

14. While working with <u>the policy</u>, I can be in keeping with the <u>client's</u> needs (R)

15. Working with the <u>policy</u> feels like I am in a harness in which I cannot easily move

16. When I work with the <u>policy</u>, I have to adhere to tight procedures

17. While working with the <u>policy</u>, I cannot sufficiently tailor it to the needs of my <u>clients</u>

18. While working with the <u>policy</u>, I can make my own judgments (R)

Societal meaninglessness

19. I think that the <u>policy</u>, in the long term, will lead to <u>goal 1</u> (R)

20. I think that the policy, in the short term, will lead to <u>goal 1</u> (R)

21. I think that the <u>policy</u> has already led to <u>goal 1</u>(R)

22. Overall, I think that the <u>policy</u> leads to <u>goal 1</u> (R)

Client meaninglessness

23. With the <u>policy</u> I can better solve the problems of my <u>clients</u> (R)

24. The <u>policy</u> is contributing to the welfare of my <u>clients</u> (R)

25. Because of the <u>policy</u>, I can help <u>clients</u> more efficiently than before (R)

26. I think that the <u>policy</u> is ultimately favorable for my <u>clients</u> (R)

All items use a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree, through disagree, neutral, and agree to strongly agree. In Table A1.1, a number of words are underlined. These are the 'template' words. Templates allow researchers to adapt items to their specific situation by replacing general phrases with more specific ones: ones that fit the context of their research. For example, instead of using the terms 'the policy', 'organization', and 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items to suit the specific situation, for example replacing them with 'the DRG policy', 'institution' and 'mental healthcare professionals'. As an example, one of the template items for tactical powerlessness was:

> *In my <u>organization</u>, <u>professionals</u> could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the <u>policy.</u>*

In our example, this becomes:

> *In my <u>institution</u>, <u>mental healthcare professionals</u> could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the <u>DRG policy.</u>*

If you intend to use the policy alienation items in a survey, you should decide which terms are appropriate. In Table A1.2, we show the terms used in the standard templates, as well as examples of how these terms were altered for two of the specific cases studied.

Table A1.2 Terms and templates in the scale items

Term in standard template	Term used in DRG-policy	Term used in the twenty–week ultrasound policy
Policy/change	DRG policy, or DRGs	Structural ultrasound assessment
Professionals	Mental healthcare professionals	Healthcare professionals
Organization	Institution	Organization
Clients	Patients	Clients (child and parents)
Policy goal	Four goals were identified. Increasing: - Transparency in costs - Transparency in quality - Efficiency - Patient choice among providers	Three goals were identified. Increasing: - Insights into possible defects in the child - Insights into referral opportunities for treatment - Insights into option of abortion up to 24 weeks
Ministry	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Based on these examples, you can develop your own questionnaire. In this questionnaire, a number of additional scales could be inserted, for example regarding the willingness to implement the policy, personality characteristics, or job satisfaction. Appendix 2 suggests a number of scales which can be used.

1.5.2 Qualitative analysis: Policy alienation interview protocol

This section provides an overview of the main subjects that are covered in an interview protocol for discussing policy alienation. A semi-structured interview protocol is encouraged. As with a structured interview, a set of themes is selected in advance. However, unlike a structured interview, a semi-structured interview is flexible, allowing new questions to be raised during the interview based on the answers from a respondent. The exact content of the interview will depend, among other things, on the research question, the policy and the sector involved, and on the individual characteristics of the interviewer and interviewee. What is shown here is a very general interview protocol for policy alienation, with a focus on the degree of policy alienation and its influencing factors. More specific interview protocols for the various cases have been developed.

Introduction

- State the goals of the interview and the goal of the research
- Check if audio recording is allowed
- Discuss anonymity issues with respondent
- State general outlines of the research
- Discuss outline of the interview, for example:
  - The interview concerns the experiences of public professionals with new governmental policy, in this case [here: policy X]. The interview considers (a) to what extent you, as a public professional, can identify with policy X? and (b) which factors influence this identification/alienation with the policy, and (c) what are the effects of this identification/alienation with the policy?

General - Respondent

- General information about the interviewee: Could you please say something about yourself (age, education, profession, number of years in profession, etc.)?
- Role as a professional: What are your experiences as a professional, how do you experience your work?

General – Policy X

Context

- What do you think are the most important changes which have happened as a result of the introduction of Policy X (in general and for implementing professionals in particular)?

Influence on work

- How does this influence your work?

View on policy

- What do you think of policy X?
- Why do think in this way about the policy?

Alienation/identification

- To which extent can you identify with policy X?
- Why can you (not) identify with policy X?

Powerlessness

Strategic powerlessness

- Do you think you, as a group of professionals, could influence decisions concerning the content of policy X, as is captured in rules and regulations?
- What do you think are the main reasons for this?

Tactical powerlessness

- Do you think you, as a group of professionals, could influence decisions concerning the way policy is implemented within you own organization?
- What do you think are the main reasons for this?

Operational powerlessness

- Do you feel that, when implementing policy X, you have sufficient autonomy?
- What do you think are the main reasons for this?

Meaninglessness

Societal meaninglessness

- What do you think are the goals of policy X?
- To what extent do you agree with these goals?
- Do you feel that policy X contributes to achieving these goals?
- What do you think are the main reasons for this?

Client meaninglessness
- Do you feel that you can help your own clients better as a result of policy X?
- What do you think are the main reasons for this?

Document analysis (only for interviews serving as a member check)
- Discuss preliminary results of the document analysis
- Ask respondents if they (a) disagree with certain results, (b) if important results have been missed, (c) if they have any other remarks

Summarizing and concluding remarks

- Summarize the topics discussed in the interview
- Ask whether the respondent has any additional questions/comments
- Ask whether the respondent wants to receive the final report
- Thank respondent for interview

1.6   Step 5 – Data collection, analysis, and reporting

After these steps, you can start your data collection and the subsequent research stages such as data analysis and reporting of the results. This will depend on your chosen method and the situation being studied.

We hope that the policy alienation framework provides a fruitful framework for understanding the attitudes regarding a particular change, such as a new policy. Good luck!

2

ALL SCALES AND CORRESPONDING ITEMS USED IN QUESTIONNAIRES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This appendix includes all the scales used in this study. Five-point Likert scales were used with all the items unless otherwise stated. We have structured this using three levels. First, we will show the scales on the work level, such as work alienation, job satisfaction, and work effort. Second, scales on the policy level are shown, including all the policy alienation scales. A Dutch translation of the policy alienation scales and the items therein are included in the Dutch summary (samenvatting). Further, a number of scales drawn from change management, such as willingness to change and behavioral support for a change are included, and may be usefully applied in some studies. In our study, the concept of change refers to the policy the professionals have to implement. Third, a number of scales are included that regard personality characteristics, such as rebelliousness.

2.2 SCALES ON THE WORK LEVEL

Work alienation – Powerlessness (Mottaz, 1981)

1. I have a good deal of freedom in the performance of my daily task (R)
2. I have the opportunity to exercise my own judgment on the job (R)
3. I have little control over how I carry out my daily tasks
4. I make most work decisions without first consulting my supervisor (R)
5. I am not able to make changes regarding my job activities
6. My daily tasks are largely determined by others
7. I make my own decisions in the performance of my work role (R)

Work alienation – Meaninglessness (Mottaz, 1981)

1. My work is a significant contribution to the successful operation of the organization (R)
2. Sometimes I am not sure I completely understand the purpose of what I am doing
3. My work is really important and worthwhile (R)
4. I often wonder what the importance of my job really is
5. I often feel that my work counts for very little around here
6. I understand how my work role fits into the overall operation of this organization (R)
7. I understand how my work fits with the work of others here (R)

Job satisfaction (Nagy, 2002)
Overall, I am satisfied with my job

Intention to leave (D. P. Bozeman & Perrewé, 2001)

1. I will probably look for a new job in the near future
2. At the present time, I am actively searching for another job in a different organization
3. I do not intend to quit my job (R)
4. It is unlikely that I will look for a different organization to work for in the next year (R)
5. I am not thinking about quitting my job at the present time

Work effort (Gould-Williams, 2004)

1. I help new workers, even when not required to do so
2. I stay late if necessary to help out
3. I make suggestions for improvements
4. I volunteer for things that are not part of the job
5. I avoid extra duties and responsibilities (R)
6. I always work particularly hard
7. I seek out training and other ways of improving my performance at work
8. I work hard because I want to

Politicking (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009)

1. Within our organization, power games between the departments play an important role
2. Staff members are sometimes taken advantage of in our organization
3. In our organization, favoritism is an important way to achieve something
4. In our organization, lobbying for political reasons often takes place (new)

2.3 Scales on a policy level

Looking at the policy-level scales, you will see that, for numerous scales, words are underlined. These are the 'templates'. Templates allow researchers to adapt items to their specific situation by replacing general phrases with more specific ones: ones that fit the context of their research. For example, instead of using the terms 'the policy', 'organization' and 'professionals', the researcher can rephrase these items to suit the specific situation, for example replacing them with 'the DRG policy', 'institution' and 'mental healthcare professionals'. As an example, one of the template items for tactical powerlessness was:

> *In my <u>organization</u>, <u>professionals</u> could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the <u>policy</u>.*

In our example this becomes:

> *In my <u>institution</u>, <u>mental healthcare professionals</u> could take part in conversations regarding the execution of the <u>DRG policy</u>.*

In Table A2.1, we have shown the terms in the standard template can be used, as well as two examples how these terms can be altered for the specific case studied.

Table A1.1 Terms and templates when using scale items

Term in standard template	Term used with DRG policy	Term used in twenty-week ultrasound policy
Policy/change	DRG policy or DRGs	Structural ultrasound assessment
Professionals	Mental healthcare professionals	Healthcare professionals
Organization	Institution	Organization
Clients	Patients	Clients (child and parents)
Policy goal	Four goals were identified. Increasing: - Transparency in costs - Transparency in quality - Efficiency - Patient choice among providers	Three goals were identified. Increasing: - Insights into possible defects of the child - Insights into referral opportunities for treatment - Insights into possibility of abortion up to 24 weeks
Ministry	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport	Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Strategic powerlessness – Sub-dimension of policy alienation

1. In my opinion, <u>professionals</u> had too little power to influence the <u>policy</u>
2. We <u>professionals</u> were completely powerless during the introduction of the policy
3. <u>Professionals</u> could not at all influence the development of the policy at the national level (Minister and Ministry of X, National Government)
4. On a national level, <u>professionals</u> could influence how the policy was set up (R)
5. <u>Professionals</u>, through their professional associations, actively helped to think with the design of the policy (R)

6. Politicians did not, during the design of the policy, listen to the professionals at all

Tactical powerlessness – Sub-dimension of policy alienation

1. In my organization, especially professionals could decide how the policy was to be implemented (R)
2. In my organization, professionals have, through working groups or meetings, taken part in decisions on the execution of the policy (R)
3. The management of my organization should have involved the professionals far more in the execution of the policy
4. Professionals were not listened to over the introduction of the policy in my organization
5. In my organization, professionals could take part in discussions regarding the execution of the policy (R)
6. I and my fellow professionals were completely powerless in the introduction of the policy in my organization

Operational powerlessness or discretion – Sub-dimension of policy alienation

1. I have freedom to decide how to use the policy (R)
2. While working with the policy, I can be in keeping with the client's needs (R)
3. Working with the policy feels like I am in a harness in which I cannot easily move
4. When I work with the policy, I have to adhere to tight procedures
5. While working with the policy, I cannot sufficiently tailor it to the needs of my clients
6. While working with the policy, I can make my own judgments (R)

Societal meaninglessness – Sub-dimension of policy alienation

1. I think that the policy, in the long term, will lead to goal 1 (R)
2. I think that the policy, in the short term, will lead to goal 1 (R)
3. I think that the policy has already led to goal 1(R)
4. Overall, I think that the policy leads to goal 1 (R)

Client meaninglessness – Sub-dimension of policy alienation

1. With the policy I can better solve the problems of my clients (R)
2. The policy is contributing to the welfare of my clients (R)
3. Because of the policy, I can help clients more efficiently than before (R)
4. I think that the policy is ultimately favorable for my clients (R)

Personal meaninglessness (cf. Holt et al., 2007)
1. As a result of the <u>change</u>, I experience positive financial consequences
2. In the long term, the <u>change</u> is beneficial for me
3. I have won little as a result of the introduction of the <u>change</u>
4. My future in this job will be limited because of the <u>change</u>
5. I am worried I have lost some of my status due to the introduction of the <u>change</u>
6. As a result of the <u>change</u>, I have to do more administrative work
7. The <u>change</u> erodes my duty of professional confidentiality

Subjective norm (Metselaar, 1997)
Based on theoretical and empirical arguments, we distinguished between the subjective norm of managers (directors and managers) and others (colleagues, subordinates, and others in my organization unit). See Chapter 7.

Please indicate how the following people feel about the change (five-point scale, from very negative to very positive):
1. My board of directors [group: managers]
2. My manager [group: managers]
3. My colleagues [group: professionals]
4. My subordinates [group: professionals]
5. Others in my organization unit [group: professionals]

Willingness to change (Metselaar, 1997)
1. I intend to try to convince employees of the benefits the <u>change</u> will bring
2. I intend to put effort into achieving the goals of the <u>change</u>
3. I intend to reduce resistance among employees regarding the <u>change</u>
4. I intend to make time to implement the <u>change</u>
5. I intend to put effort in, in order to implement the <u>change</u> successfully

Behavioral support for a change (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002)
Behavioral support for a change is measured on a 101-point continuum constructed to reflect a range of resistant and supportive behavior.

What is your behavior regarding the <u>change</u>. Please indicate the number of points:

Championing (81-100 points)
- I demonstrate extreme enthusiasm for the <u>change</u> by going above and beyond what is formally required to ensure the success of the <u>change</u> and promoting the *change* to others

Cooperation (61-80 points)
- I demonstrate support for the <u>change</u> by exerting effort, going along with the spirit of the <u>change</u>, and being prepared to make modest sacrifices

Compliance (31-60 points)
- I demonstrate minimum support for the <u>change</u> by going along with the <u>change</u>, but doing so reluctantly

Passive resistance (21-40 points)
- I demonstrate opposition in response to the <u>change</u> by engaging in covert or subtle behaviors aimed at preventing the success of the <u>change</u>

Active resistance (0-20 points)
- I engage in overt behaviors that are intended to ensure that the <u>change</u> fails

Number of points: …

2.4 Scale on a personal level

Rule compliance (based on the European Social Survey)
1. A good citizen always complies with the rules and laws
2. You always have to strictly abide by the law, even if that means that good opportunities will be lost as a result
3. Occasionally it is acceptable to ignore the law and do what you want (R)
4. A good citizen lives by the rules and laws
5. The law must always be respected, regardless of the circumstances

Rebelliousness (Shen & Dillard, 2005)
1. I become frustrated when I am unable to make free and independent decisions
2. It irritates me when someone points out things which are obvious to me
3. I become angry when my freedom of choice is restricted
4. Regulations trigger a sense of resistance in me
5. I find contradicting others stimulating
6. When something is prohibited, I usually think, "That's exactly what I am going to do."
7. I am content only when I am acting of my own free will
8. I resist the attempts of others to influence me

9. It makes me angry when another person is held up as a role model for me to follow
10. When someone forces me to do something, I feel like doing the opposite
11. I consider advice from others to be an intrusion
12. Advice and recommendations usually induce me to do just the opposite

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lars Tummers studied business economics at Tilburg University and Università Bocconi in Milan (Masters level, drs.). Following this, he followed the Research Master's program in public administration and organizational sciences, a cooperative venture between Erasmus University Rotterdam, Utrecht University, and Tilburg University (Research Master, MSc). In 2007, he started as a PhD student and lecturer in Public Administration at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Alongside his PhD research, Lars has worked as a management consultant at PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) Advisory, Public Sector, specializing in healthcare.

Currently, Lars is an assistant professor in Public Administration at the Erasmus University. Alongside this, he works regularly as a consultant and applied researcher, among others with PwC Advisory. This combination allows him to combine theoretical and practical insights, strengthening both his academic and consultancy work. Further, he is a member of the scientific committee for monitoring the professionalization of youth care and co-chairs the panel 'Reframing professionals and professionalism in public domains', for the Netherlands Institute of Government (NIG).

His research focuses on public management (and especially the relationships between professionals and managers), public innovation, and policy processes. He specializes in the attitudes and behaviors of people in policy processes. In his PhD research, using the innovative concept of 'policy alienation', Lars has examined the problems public professionals experience during policy implementation. Further, he has developed sound knowledge on large-scale quantitative benchmarking, for instance on employee satisfaction, employee motivation, and employee vitality.

His work has been published in several international refereed journals, such as Public Administration Review, Public Administration, Public Management Review, Administration & Society, and the International Review of Administrative Sciences. Further, he has published in national journals and newspapers, such as Beleid en Maatschappij, Kwalon, ZM Magazine, Trouw, and Het Financieele Dagblad (FD).

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Currently, there is an intense debate on the pressures facing public professionals in service delivery. Many professionals show increasing discontent toward the policies they have to implement. In healthcare, one saw psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists demonstrating against government plans to implement Diagnosis Related Groups (Diagnose Behandeling Combinaties, DBC's). Further, many secondary school teachers have had difficulties identifying with the Second Phase policy (Tweede Fase). These examples are not unique: public professionals often appear to have difficulties identifying with the policies they have to implement. This can have severe consequences for policy performance, and also for the working lives of these professionals.

To date, there has been a lack of a coherent, theoretical framework for analyzing this topic. In response to this gap, this study builds a theoretical framework for 'policy alienation'. Policies in healthcare, social security and education are analyzed, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. We selected policies which had a high degree of policy alienation, as well as policies which were more positively received.

The conclusions of this study challenge the common assertions regarding the reasons why public professionals resist policies. For instance, we found that professionals often agreed with the business goals of new policies. They were unwilling to implement such a policy not because it focused on business goals, but because it would not achieve them. Furthermore, we nuance the impact of professional influence, which is often viewed as an end in itself. What we saw is that it is more important for professionals that a policy is meaningful for society, and for their own clients, than that they have an influence in its shaping.

The results of this study have implications for public administration scholars, public professionals, public managers and policy makers. In order to improve the academic and practical significance of this study, an instrument is developed to measure the degree of policy alienation of implementers. This instrument can be used to first understand and then improve policy performance.

Lars Tummers is an assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration at the Erasmus University Rotterdam.