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## **Fostering Virtue in Public Sector Organizations**

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# Fostering virtue in public sector organizations

## About an integrity management instrument in the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

In the Netherlands, the public sector pays special attention to its ethical quality. This happens mostly under the flag of ‘integrity management’. This paper gives a short overview of integrity management, the way virtue ethics is finding its place in it, and then focuses on a virtue ethical instrument, developed by the Dutch National Integrity Office (BIOS) in 2009: *Integriteit deugt* (‘deugt’ is a Dutch verb indicating virtuous activity). Users of this instrument are enthusiastic about virtue ethics and hold that it offers a promising perspective on integrity. But, they find it difficult to implement. Also, only a small number of skilled ethicists feels competent to moderate the conversation model that is at the core of it. Furthermore, BIOS resolved to provide top executives and administrators more support in their role as ethical leaders. Therefore, this year BIOS has been working on a more accessible adaptation of *Integriteit deugt*, especially suited to these leaders in the public sector. At this moment, *Integriteit deugt II* is still a work in progress, aiming for publication in 2016. So at this stage, helpful comments, additions and references would be greatly appreciated.

### Overview

Starting in the 1990s, over the last decades the Netherlands developed an integrity policy, making Dutch governmental organizations legally required to safeguard and foster integrity. Paragraph 1 sketches how this is organized, and what role BIOS plays.

In the Netherlands the term integrity is used in a broad sense. Not only is it an antonym to corruption and other moral wrongdoings, it is also understood in a positive way, relating to moral excellence and exemplary behavior. Paragraph 2 explains this broad understanding.

Obviously, encouraging moral excellence requires different measures than preventing corruption. Paragraph 3 discusses the two main strategies that emerged in integrity management policies: ‘compliance’ and (confusingly) ‘integrity’. A compliance strategy encompasses activities based on rules and control (e.g. strict tendering procedures), mostly focused on anticorruption. An

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this paper first appeared in Becker & Talsma (2016). This paper is a work in progress. Please do not cite without permission from the author.

integrity strategy rather uses measures based on values and trust (e.g. training in moral deliberation), emphasizing moral excellence.

One of the main problems that integrity management is encountering today, is how to combine these two different strategies. Rules, prohibitions and control mechanisms seem to be at odds with values, encouragement and trust mechanisms. In the last few years, virtue ethics has emerged as a new and possibly fruitful perspective. Paragraph 4 discusses this turn to virtue ethics and the way in which virtue ethics is perceived as a helpful moral theory.

As one of the forerunners in this turn to virtue ethics, in 2010, BIOS developed a new instrument for the public sector, *Integriteit deugt*, based on Aristotelian virtue ethics. *Integriteit deugt* consists of a book, a DVD and a conversational model. Paragraph 5 presents the outlines of this instrument.

Paragraph 6 links virtue ethics to ethical leadership. The latter is an important new theme in integrity management. More and more, scholars and policy makers come to realize that the role of the highest executives is crucial to integrity management. Unfortunately, leaders underestimate their *visibility* as a moral role model, and show a lack in moral vocabulary to be able to actively discuss and encourage integrity. Therefore, BIOS resolved to provide top executives and administrators more support in their role as ethical leaders.

Despite the fact that users of *Integriteit deugt* are enthusiastic about virtue ethics and hold that it offers a promising perspective on integrity, they find it difficult to implement. Also, only a small number of skilled ethicists feels competent to use the conversation model. Therefore, this year BIOS has been working on a more accessible adaptation of the conversation model in *Integriteit deugt*, especially suited to these leaders in the public sector. Paragraph 7 gives an outline of this adaptation, the difficulties that we encountered and the questions we are still facing.

Virtue ethics is a promising perspective in the field of integrity management. But cultivating virtue in experienced and mature professionals is a challenge. As a case study, maybe this paper can provide both theorists and practitioners from different disciplines new leads to take integrity policies a step further, and to learn more about virtue ethics in professional practices.

## **1. Integrity policy in the Netherlands**

Dutch governmental organizations are legally required to safeguard and foster 'integrity'. Roughly, integrity indicates the moral quality of the organization. But how integrity is understood exactly, will be discussed in the next paragraph. First, I will sketch how integrity requirements are organized in the Netherlands, and what role the Dutch National Integrity Office (BIOS) plays.

Before the beginning of the 1990s, integrity was hardly on the political or societal agenda. Sure, there were the occasional corruption scandals, but these did not generate any structural

attention. This changed when the government became aware of criminal organizations attempting to corrupt civil servants at key positions. At the same time, corruption scandals in one Dutch province received a stream of media attention. On a very large scale, building companies were cooperating as cartels and bribing public officials. Fueled by an influential speech in 1992 by Ien Dales, then Minister of the Interior, the Netherlands started developing a national integrity policy (Hoekstra & Kaptein 2014).

Over the course of twenty-five years, the Netherlands developed legislation, regulation, jurisprudence and policies concerning integrity. Most importantly, several changes were made in the Dutch Civil Service Act. With the last change in 2006, civil servants are obliged to 'behave in the manner of a good civil servant'. Notably, a similar obligation was made to apply for the employer, stating it should 'behave in the manner of a good employer'. Thus, it is grounded in law that governments and its officials should be morally good. Furthermore, in 2005 the central government, provinces, municipalities and the police force agreed upon the 'Model Approach for Basic Integrity Standards for Public Administration and the Police Force' (Basic Standards). This outlines which instruments and measures every organization in the public administration should have, such as a whistleblower policy and regular schooling and training for employees.

The Netherlands functions as a decentralized unitary state. This means that individual governmental organizations such as provinces and municipalities have substantial responsibilities and powers of their own. Each governmental organization has to develop its own integrity policy and safeguard its own ethical quality. Within the frameworks of the Civil Service Act and the Basic Standards, they can develop and implement an integrity policy best suited to their own organization. In this fashion, the Dutch integrity system acknowledges the fact that there can be differences in moral 'couleur locale'. The Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, currently Ronald Plasterk, oversees this integrity system. His ministry acts as coordinator, setting the central frameworks, developing legislation and providing support (Hagedoorn & Hermus forthcoming).

For a large part, this practical support is provided via the Dutch National Integrity Office (Bureau Integriteitsbevordering Openbare Sector, BIOS). Founded in 2006, BIOS supports public sector organizations in the development and implementation of their integrity policies. As the Zweegers (current head of BIOS) and Hoekstra (one of BIOS' founders) state:

BIOS helps organizations to help themselves. This distinguishes BIOS from "ordinary" ethics consultants that can be hired to actually set up, audit, or fix integrity systems in organizations, or to investigate possible wrongdoing. But since integrity is such a core value of good governance, care for integrity should not – conveniently – be contracted out to (commercial) parties of this kind. Instead, organizations should be enabled to take care of

ethics and integrity themselves and BIOS supports them in that endeavor. (Zweegers & Hoekstra forthcoming).

Although BIOS is funded by the Dutch Ministry for the Interior and Kingdom Relations, it is independent and not a part of the Ministry. This guarantees autonomy and ensures that for the necessary resources it is not dependent of for example commercial activities.

A core activity of BIOS is the collection of knowledge, spotting new trends and gathering relevant information. BIOS actively participates in research projects, carries out academic studies and issues publications such as the yearly *Yearbook Integrity*. Secondly, BIOS plays an important role in bringing people together, via large-scale events such as the yearly *Day of Integrity* (500 participants) and smaller integrity management courses for civil servants (10-15 participants). A third core activity is the development of practical guides and instruments to discuss, test or improve integrity within organizations. For instance, BIOS developed the *Integrity Cube*, a collection of videos with actors showing the different sides of moral dilemmas, and *Integriteit deugt*. The latter receives extensive attention in this paper. (More information on [www.integriteitoverheid.nl/international](http://www.integriteitoverheid.nl/international).) Lastly, BIOS also advises mayors and King's commissioners when they have to investigate possible integrity violations by council members or other holders of political office.

## **2. Broad scope of integrity**

In the first paragraph, integrity was put between brackets for a reason. In the Netherlands the term integrity is used in a broad sense, somewhat different from other (Anglophonic) countries. Not only is it an antonym to corruption and other moral wrongdoings, it is also understood in a positive way, relating to moral excellence and exemplary behavior. Paragraph 2 explains this broad understanding.

Similar to most other countries, in the Netherlands the term integrity is used as antonym for corruption, including bribery and favoritism. These are the classical moral evils for public administration: civil servants and administrators who, instead of acting in the public interest, act in their own interest. But in the Netherlands, integrity is also understood in a broader sense, being an antonym to much more than corruption alone. For instance, inappropriate behaviors such as sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying are perceived as integrity violations by both policy makers and employees (De Graaf & Strüwer 2014). Also fraud, conflicts of interest, improper use of authority, misuse of information, indecent treatment of colleagues and citizens, abuse of organizational resources and misconduct in private time are regarded as integrity violations (Huberts 2014).

These violations are all forms of moral wrongdoing. But beyond this, integrity also has a more positive dimension, of trust, ethical deliberation and accountability, and moral excellence. This is consistent with the way BIOS tries to advance integrity:

In the Netherlands, integrity involves more than anti-corruption and has a broader, more extensive meaning. BIOS's integrity approach not only concerns preventing breaches of integrity but also promoting an ethical climate marked by features including openness, safety, respect, trust, leadership, and justice. (Zweegers & Hoekstra, forthcoming)

Thus, integrity is not only understood as something contrasting to a broad scope of moral wrongdoings, it is also used to designate moral goods on their own. Trust, justice, fairness and openness, responsibility and accountability are oft-named values in this.

To complicate matters, 'integrity' can be used as adjective to both persons and organizations. In the Netherlands, but in international literature as well, these two are regularly mixed up. One can say, roughly, that persons of integrity show ethical behavior and, possibly, have praiseworthy character traits. This is integrity on a micro level. But on a meso level, it is about organizations that have successful integrity policies, limiting the amount of violations, coping adequately with inevitable mishaps, and encouraging ethical behavior. In other words, such organizations have a matured and effective integrity management policy. The natural follow-up question then is: how can organizations manage integrity?

### **3. Rules or values? Two strategies of integrity management**

How does one 'manage integrity'? First of all, one has to acknowledge that integrity management is both a very old and a relatively young discipline in public administration. On the one hand, the integrity of government is a problem that is as old as government itself. Take for instance the 14th century Sieneese frescoes of 'The Allegory of Good and Bad Governance' by Lorenzetti. These frescoes served as an early code of conduct, reminding the administrators in the city hall that they should possess the Aristotelian virtues of fortitude, justice, prudence and temperance, as well as the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. And there are more examples of 'ethics management' for administrators, in classical texts that serve as 'mirrors for princes', such as Xenophon's Education of Cyrus, Confucius' Analects and Erasmus' Education of a Christian Prince (Kaak & Weeks 2014).

On the other hand, integrity management in its current form is no older than twenty, maybe thirty years (Hoekstra 2016). As a young discipline, it is still developing itself and the scientific body of knowledge to support it (Huberts 2014, Menzel 2015, Talsma & Karssing 2015). From paragraph 4 on

this paper will discuss the future of integrity management. But first, let us take a look at how far we have come already.

Integrity management is the sum of systematic and integrated efforts to promote integrity within an organization (Hoekstra 2016). Obviously, encouraging moral excellence requires different measures than hunting down corruption. To cope with this, Paine (1994) developed the now much-used distinction between 'compliance' and (a bit confusingly) 'integrity' approaches to ethics management. Roughly, this corresponds to two different integrity management strategies that emerged over time, based on either rules or on values.

The first of these, compliance, was also chronologically the first integrity management strategy that was developed and implemented. A compliance approach to integrity management considers people to be untrustworthy and relies very strongly on control mechanisms and a strict enforcement of rules: 'a compliance-based strategy is designed to generate fear of sanctions, and, thus, extrinsic motivation' (Huberts 2014: 177). The focus is on identifying and removing 'bad apples' as quickly and painless as possible, as well as preventing new bad apples from infiltrating the organization. Typical instruments that play the leading role in a compliance strategy are pre-employment screening, top-down developed codes of conduct, and procedures concerning for example tendering and financial interests (Hoekstra et. al. forthcoming). Needless to say, a compliance strategy is mostly about preventing corruption and other violations, whereas little attention is given to moral excellence.

An integrity approach to integrity management (here the awkwardness of the terminology shows) is in many aspects the opposite of a compliance approach. Instead of top-down, it is bottom-up. Instead of rule-abiding, it is about the prudent use of professional powers. An integrity strategy is more prone to use measures based on values and trust, such as training in moral deliberation, emphasizing moral excellence and relying on self-control and internal motivation as important mechanisms (Hoekstra et. al. forthcoming).

The integrity approach emerged several years after the compliance approach (Hoekstra & Kaptein 2014). Though the latter proved to show quick results and some necessary precautions, working with rules alone has its limitations. These have been broadly recognized (Hoekstra 2006, Vandekerckhove 2014). Rules call for interpretation, prudent application and are most of the times not yet adapted to new situations. Moreover, professionals feel distrusted and limited by a lack of discretionary space and an abundance of control. Lastly, an integrity approach seems to be more effective in the long run: 'a values-based strategy is supposed to advance employees' intrinsic motivation to integrity – thereby yielding more lasting effects' (Huberts 2014: 177).

So, should we use the carrot instead of the stick? When value-based strategies started to emerge, this was a much-heard question (Hoekstra & Kaptein 2014). Now that the dust has settled,

people still have their preferences. For instance, directly after scandals, the call for compliance tends to be stronger. And when higher educated, independently working professionals (such as teachers, doctors or policy advisors) are interviewed, they mostly lean towards more emphasis on values, less rules. But overall, there is growing consensus amongst integrity scholars that we need both: 'a value-based strategy without clear norms and rules and sanctions has no bite. Rather, the existing evidence on instruments suggests that a balance of compliance-based and values-based approaches may work best' (Huberts 2014: 179).

In the Netherlands, this viewpoint has found its way into the Civil Service Act and the Basic Standards. They both contain rule- and value-based components. And on the work floor, integrity officers also try to find an effective combination, suited to the needs of their organization.

#### **4. Virtue ethics as integrity management strategy**

Unfortunately, a coherent story about how the carrot and the stick are related to each other, is still lacking. Rules, prohibitions and control mechanisms seem to be at odds with values, encouragement and trust mechanisms. One of the main problems that integrity management is encountering today, is how to combine the two different strategies into one coherent policy. Virtue ethics has emerged as a possibly fruitful perspective to this problem. This paragraph discusses this turn to virtue ethics and the way in which virtue ethics is perceived as a helpful perspective to bridge the two approaches.

In organizational and business ethics, several authors have turned towards virtue ethics as a fruitful perspective for integrity management (Solomon 1993, Oakley & Cocking 2001, Hoekstra 2006, Moore & Beadle 2006, Tholen 2011, Hartman 2013, Overeem 2014, Becker & Talsma 2016). This could be understood as a part of the value-based trend. In the search for ways to stimulate employees intrinsic motivation, virtue ethics serves as a helpful theory. Virtues explain how values can take shape into professionals, and how practice can make people gradually better. Practical wisdom gives food for thought about the prudent application of discretionary powers and rules by administrators and civil servants, and teleology explains how it is possible that people are (most of the times) intrinsically motivated to do good.<sup>2</sup> But on a closer look, virtue ethics is also helpful in explaining how rules and values can go together, in a real synthesis rather than a combination of opposites.

Aristotle's famous statement that 'man is a social animal' (*Politics* 1253a4) means that the development of virtue only succeeds when it is facilitated and stimulated by a social environment, in a community where people share basic norms and values (MacIntyre 2014: 217). A virtue ethical approach to integrity and ethics management takes as a starting point that organizations are 'first of

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<sup>2</sup> For a more extensive discussion of these and similar arguments, see Oakley & Cocking 2001, Hoekstra 2006, Macaulay & Lawton 2006, Moore & Beadle 2006, Tholen 2011, Overeem 2014 and Becker & Talsma 2016.



all communities, social groups with shared purposes' (Solomon 1993: 131). Such communities have rules, norms or standards that are worth following and enforcing.

MacIntyre captures this idea adequately with his concept of a practice. In his view, a practice is 'a coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized' (2014: 218). Examples of practices are making music, providing healthcare, or playing football. What separates a practice from other forms of human activity, is that it is aimed at a good 'internal to that form of activity'. Think for instance of musicians, playing together for the pleasure of playing together. The internal good of making music, characterizes what making music is all about. Likewise, professional practices can be characterized by their internal good. Healthcare is about caring to people's health; law is about ensuring lawfulness; science is about gaining knowledge.

Practices involve 'standards of excellence and obedience to rules as well as the achievement of goods' (MacIntyre 2014: 221). This means that in a virtue ethical approach, rules have a natural place. For instance, musicians obey to certain explicit rules (i.e. the instructions of the conductor) and follow implicit norms (i.e. to listen attentively to each other), to achieve the internal good of playing music together. In much the same way, physicians ideally follow the rules and standards of their practice to achieve good healthcare. If integrity consists of remaining true to the role of one's profession, professionals must be focused on the rules that follow from the internal good: 'to play the game is to accept (...) the rules that define them' (Solomon 1993: 120).

Values find their place in a practice as well. They should stem from the internal goods of the profession. In law, given the internal good of 'justice', highly valued values should be accuracy and impartiality, since these are the values that contribute to the good of the profession. Practices involve virtues as well, as standards of excellence. 'The virtues enable the individual to achieve the goods internal to practices' (Moore & Beadle 2006: 372). Becoming virtuous means becoming able to engage in a practice, acting according to its standards and realizing its values.

So, the theoretical basis is there. Integrity management could benefit from a virtue ethical perspective if it wants to surpass the distinction between rules and values. With core ideas such as virtues, practical wisdom, internal goods and practices, integrity officials can work upon building a moral community within their organization. Rules and sanctions have their natural place in such a community, just as reflection, discussion and the prudent application of them. But at this point, we are left with a starting point instead of an answer. Like Tholen recently concluded: 'Though the claim that virtue ethics could be fruitful for professional ethics is not new, there is still much to be done to put this into practice' (2011: 38). The practical question is therefore, how does one foster and maintain a moral community within public sector organizations?

## 5. About the instrument *Integriteit deugt*

Rome wasn't built in a day, and the same goes for moral communities. It takes time and effort, and has to take into account the history, tasks and (political) environment of an organization. To support integrity officials in this work, BIOS develops practical tools and instruments. In 2009, virtue ethics was recognized as a fruitful perspective by BIOS. To disclose and spread this knowledge, BIOS developed a new instrument for the public sector: *Integriteit deugt*. This paragraph presents the outlines of the instrument.

In Dutch, 'deugt' is a verb indicating virtuous activity. *Integriteit deugt* is the result of an interdisciplinary project, and brought about with the help of Paul van Tongeren and Marcel Becker (virtue ethicists), Edgar Karssing (business ethicist) and Ron Niessen (public administration researcher). Moreover, a series of interviews with civil servants and public administrators was conducted. This gave more insight into how virtue ethics is linked to their everyday practice. For instance, an administrator commented on how he recognized in everyday work life that role modelling is important for integrity.

*Integriteit deugt* consists of three parts. First, a book with several essays (Becker et. al. 2010). These essays highlight several themes that connect integrity to virtue ethics, such as professional discretion, and practicing in integrity. Furthermore, they discuss the four cardinal virtues (justice, courage, temperance and prudence), as well as some core ideas: role modelling, practice, and teleology or purposefulness. The purpose of these essays is to introduce integrity officers to the basic vocabulary of virtue ethics. The book concludes with several practical advices and ideas for implementing virtue ethics in integrity management. For instance, to encourage people to give compliments and reward morally excellent behavior, to identify and showcase role models, and to make sure training efforts are repeated.

Secondly, *Integriteit deugt* contains a DVD with explanatory animations, connecting virtue ethics to the workplace. These are short introductions to virtue ethical terms, parallel to the essays in the book. Short clips of the conducted interviews also appear on the DVD. The videos can be used in presentations, workshops, training sessions and individually.

Thirdly, a conversation model was developed. This model has a twofold goal. First of all, to help civil servants to reflect upon moral questions and problems they face. Secondly, the model makes its users familiar with a virtue ethical vocabulary. This gives them more ways in which to discuss integrity issues in the workplace.

The conversation model is to be used in a workshop setting of 2-3 hours. A small group of participants (5-12) is guided by a moderator. Each participant is invited to share an actual moral problem that revolves around the question 'what should I do?' The group chooses one of the problems to discuss, and throws a six-sided dice. On the sides of this dice different words are written:

courage, prudence, temperance and justice (the cardinal virtues), moral goal, and role model. This decides by chance the starting point of the discussion. For each concept, the model provides some guiding questions. For instance, 'courage' starts with questions about what is to be feared. 'Role model' encourages the group to think of an exemplary figure, and how he or she would cope with the situation. With the help of the moderator, the discussion can naturally flow from one concept into another. The short videos on the DVD can be used to clarify the ethical concepts, or bring a new viewpoint into the discussion. The conversation aims to end with a shared answer to the question what one should do.

The purpose of the instrument as a whole is to introduce integrity officers, administrators and civil servants to virtue ethics. Some time after the publication of *Integriteit deugt*, BIOS conducted an evaluation amongst users. This showed that they are enthusiastic about virtue ethics and hold that it offers a promising perspective on integrity. However, users find it difficult to implement in their organizations. Also, only a small number of skilled ethicists feels be a moderator for the conversation. It takes a considerable amount of knowledge and experience to guide groups through the conversation model. Therefore, BIOS recently decided to make a more accessible adaptation. But parallel to this, another theme and target audience became more important for BIOS: top executives and administrators, and their role as ethical leaders.

## **6. Ethical leadership and virtue ethics**

Ethical leadership is becoming more important in the field of integrity management. More and more, scholars come to realize that the role of the highest executives is crucial to integrity management. There is a growing body of scientific literature on the impact of leadership, with consensus on the important role of the leader in fostering ethics and integrity in their organization (Treviño et al. 2000, Lasthuizen 2008, Huberts 2014, Heres 2016). Policy makers are following this scientific interest, and start to pay more attention to role of leaders.

For one group of leaders in the Netherlands, this is particularly relevant: mayors. Through an upcoming amendment to the Dutch Municipalities Act, mayors will get an explicit role as 'guardian of integrity' over the city council and municipal executive. But strikingly, mayors will not get any real powers to do so. Much depends on their soft skills and moral vocabulary. A second group of leaders struggles with integrity management as well: the directors of municipalities. Representing a large proportion of the leaders in the civil service, they are an important target audience. Therefore, BIOS has resolved to develop instruments that can support these top executives and administrators in their role as ethical leader. One of the ways in which BIOS decided to do so, was to combine this with the adaptation of *Integriteit deugt* (from now on: *Integriteit deugt II*).

There are some clear connections between the issues in ethical leadership and virtue ethics. The most widely used definition of ethical leadership in integrity management research is:

...the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making. (Heres 2016: 166)

So, being an ethical leader means one is both a moral person *and* a moral manager (Trevino et. al. 2000). The first is quite obvious. It affects organizations greatly if its top executives are corrupt or immoral. The importance of being a moral person is therefore stressed. More often than not, this is even done explicitly in terms of virtues: 'empirical studies associate ethical leadership with a multitude of moral traits and virtues such as integrity, trustworthiness, reliability, honesty, transparency, conscientiousness, and a concern for justice and fairness' (Heres 2016: 166). An important goal of *Integriteit deugt II* is therefore to stimulate and support leaders in their personal moral development, giving them ways to 'practice in ethics'.

But for integrity management to be successful, leaders have to do more than only act morally. First of all, they have to actively engage in the management of integrity. As top executives, they have control over the means that are necessary to develop and maintain the integrity measures within the organization. There is much to be gained here. A simple example is the appointment of an integrity officer. In the Dutch public sector, many organizations are still lacking an official to oversee and coordinate the integrity measures (Hoekstra 2016: 153). *Integriteit deugt II* will not focus on this more technical or managerial aspect. Nevertheless, as a side effect it could still raise awareness about the importance of integrity management.

Secondly, leaders have to stimulate ethical behavior, with carrots and sticks. 'Using rewards and punishments effectively may be the most powerful way to send signals about desirable and undesirable conduct' (Treviño et al. 2000: 135). Though this will not be a focal point in *Integriteit deugt II*, it is worth mentioning that virtue ethics provides an underlying framework for reward and punishment. Leaders have to use the carrot and the stick, but they have to do so in a fair way. Sometimes, the blind application of sanctions can work counterproductive. The same applies to 'automatically' generated rewards, such as bonuses. In a moral community, reward and punishment serve to strengthen its ethical quality. They can be used to enhance virtue. By thinking about it in this way, leaders can better decide to who, how and why sanctions and rewards are being given.

Thirdly, leaders have to actively build a personal reputation of integrity. Employees can only be influenced by their perception of the leader. Role modeling therefore requires visible action and communication, showing that ethical concerns play an important role in decision-making (Heres

2016). Virtue ethics gives special weight to role modelling. Unfortunately, most leaders overestimate their visibility or think that explicit ethical leadership will work counterproductive. Furthermore, ethical leadership demands that one is able to talk about ethics and moral issues. But leaders show a lack in moral vocabulary, making them rather be silent than awkward about it. As a result, many leaders are perceived as amoral or ethically neutral (Heres 2015). Yet, virtue ethics provides a rich vocabulary to discuss integrity (Becker & Talsma 2016). For instance, all the different virtues, the idea that one can practice and improve those virtues, but also concepts like the golden mean and internal goods. Therefore, *Integriteit deugt II* will pay special attention to the words, terms and ideas a leader can make use of to discuss ethics and integrity.

### **7. A new virtue ethical instrument for leaders**

As said, users of the original *Integriteit deugt* are enthusiastic about virtue ethics and hold that it offers a promising perspective on integrity. But, they find it difficult to implement. Also, only a small number of skilled ethicists feels competent to moderate the conversation model. Furthermore, BIOS resolved to provide top executives and administrators more support in their role as ethical leaders. Therefore, this year BIOS has been working on a more accessible adaptation of *Integriteit deugt*, especially suited to these leaders in the public sector. This paragraph gives an outline of two previous (and unsuccessful) attempts to do so. Then, the adaptation as it is currently intended will be discussed. At this moment, it is still a work in progress, aiming for publication in 2016. So at this stage, your helpful comments would be greatly appreciated.

The first failed adaptation focused on the conversation model in the workshop. It was made shorter (max. two hours), since the target audience (leaders) has little time, and it was designed to be a one-time event. Since (aspiring) moderators found the original model too complicated, the idea was to simplify it. Therefore, the dice and its aspect of chance were eliminated, and the six concepts were put in a fixed order. The participants had to investigate different aspects of the moral problem with the help of the first five concepts: purpose, justice, temperance, role model, courage. The last step (prudence) then consisted in 'adding them up' in a way that shows practical wisdom.

A second failed adaptation centered around the concept of the 'golden mean'. In this design, participants got a short introduction into virtue ethics and five virtues: justice, temperance, courage, prudence and compassion. The group can choose freely which virtue(s) they think are most relevant to their moral problem. Then they are invited to formulate what the extremes of the virtue would be. For instance, if courage is most relevant, the participants have to formulate what would be cowardly and reckless in the situation. The conversation reaches a conclusion by formulating the mean between those extremes.

These adaptations were piloted and both considered to be unsuccessful. First of all, there were some issues concerning the design of the workshops. In the first adaptation, the participants found it hard to decide when they could 'proceed' to the next step. The second adaptation left the participants to free in formulating the golden mean, making it all too easy to evade confrontational arguments. But these were not even the main issues.

In both adaptations, the participants felt that the workshop was still too long, and yet they also felt it was not long enough to make the meeting worthwhile. Practically speaking, it is complicated to organize a workshop for top executives and political leaders. They have a lack of time, a lack of peers and a limited attention span. Secondly, since the workshops centered around the action-related question 'what should I do?', there was little room for personal, character-related reflection. In other words, there was no room for one of the most distinctive and valuable aspects of virtue ethics. Character development could not take center stage. And thirdly, as a one-time event the workshop did not play to another strength of virtue ethics: repetition and prolonged training.

Virtue ethics is about prolonged training and cultivation of praiseworthy traits. Brief, one-off interventions do not play at its strengths as a moral theory. Therefore, it was decided that *Integriteit deugt II* should answer to the following requirements:

- suited for repeated use over a longer period of time;
- easy to use in a lost moment, individually and in one's own time;
- interesting, inspiring, and triggering personal reflection;
- activating, with ideas for individual and group wise exercises;
- supporting leaders in developing a reputation of integrity, with ideas for visible initiatives.

Therefore, BIOS resolved on developing an inspirational booklet with different short articles and examples of exercises and activities. Leaders must be tempted to browse through it, and find ideas and inspiration in art, music, role models, stories and quotes.

The booklet will be built around six virtues. But on which virtues should we focus when it comes to integrity? Van Tongeren (2012) and Overeem (2014) make use of the classic cardinal virtues (courage, justice, temperance and prudence) since these virtues are crucial in all other virtues. MacIntyre recognizes a different set of virtues as the core professional virtues: justice, courage and truthfulness (2014: 226). Solomon gives yet another analysis of the 'supervirtue' of integrity (1993: 174), stressing openness, cooperation, loyalty and autonomy. The most fruitful approach seems to be using virtues which are relevant to the 'profession' of being a leader in the public sector. Further investigation is necessary to gain more certainty about which virtues these would be. Interesting steps to do so have been made in other professions, such as education, law and medical practice by

the Jubilee Centre (Arthur et. al. 2014, 2015a & 2015b). For the time being, BIOS has decided to use to cardinal virtues (following Van Tongeren) of justice, temperance, courage and prudence. The two additional virtues are honesty (following MacIntyre) and compassion. About the latter, we are the least certain. But based on common sense, it seems important to include a more 'warm' virtue, thereby also adding a virtue from the 'humanity'-group in the VIA Character Strengths classification.

Each virtue will be explained, and connected to the issues of the target audience. For instance, political administrators regularly face pressure and threats, resistance and risks. This calls for courage. Or as another example, top executives have access to information. The virtue of honesty can help in navigating between confidentiality and transparency. Compassion can be necessary in times of crises, to explain why an exception is made for humanitarian reasons. Temperance can aid in discussions about bonuses and expenses claims, justice in decisions about the distribution of scarce means, and prudence in realizing the public interest in very dynamic environments.

Every virtue will be accompanied by several questions and exercises. Again, helpful references to good recourses on these will be greatly appreciated. Some of those will only be a quick reflection. For instance, when considering compassion, one can ponder for a moment on which groups or persons are dependent of you. Other exercises will take a little more time. In the context of temperance, a political leader can browse through the (social) events he visited, questioning himself which invitation he had rather not accepted, in hindsight. Moreover, some activities will be suited to do together with colleagues, employees and other politicians. Such as, going on a field trip to a court, to learn more about justice. By collecting such reflective questions, exercises and activities, the goal is to tempt leaders into thinking and talking about ethics.

Lastly, the idea of the golden mean will be visualized, probably as a bull's eye with the virtues in the center and their vices on the outside. It can serve as an action perspective in case the reader struggles with the problem 'what should I do?' Though virtue ethics can not provide a simple answer to this question, the idea that good action is always a golden mean, still stands.

All and all, it is expected that *Integriteit deugt II* will support leaders in strengthening their role and reputation as ethical leader. With the use of a virtue ethical vocabulary and references to art, movies, role models etc., leaders can talk about ethics in a much more diverse manner. Moreover, they are supported in developing their own virtues. Though it is just one small step, it could be helpful in fostering virtue in public sector organizations.

## **Conclusion**

Virtue ethics is a valuable perspective to integrity management. This paper started with its theoretical merit in surpassing the opposition between rules and values, but there are many more theoretical issues in the integrity management literature to be explored. Think for instance of a

character approach to ethics training, pre-employment screening or integrity testing. All and all, we would like to encourage scholars to enlarge the body of knowledge on virtue ethics in integrity management.

At the same time, we are learning by doing. This paper also discussed how BIOS developed a practical instrument to put virtue ethics to use in organizations. The result was *Integriteit deugt*, with at its core a workshop with a conversation model. *Integriteit deugt* was appreciated, but is also in need of improvement. Furthermore, BIOS wants to give special support to leaders in the public sector. Therefore, *Integriteit deugt II* has to be easier to use, and especially suited to the needs of these leaders.

Two attempts to maintain the workshop as the core of *Integriteit deugt II* failed. Top executives and political leaders have a lack of time, a lack of peers and a limited attention span. This makes it complicated to organize an effective workshop. The chosen amount of time (two hours) proved to be too long, and yet also not long enough to make the meeting worthwhile. And since the workshops centered around the action-related question ‘what should I do?’, character development could not take center stage. Thirdly, as a one-time event the workshop did not play to another strength of virtue ethics: repetition and prolonged training.

Therefore, BIOS resolved on developing an inspirational booklet with different short articles and examples of exercises and activities. The booklet will be built around six virtues: courage, justice, temperance, prudence, honesty and compassion. Leaders must be tempted to browse through it, and find ideas and inspiration in art, music, role models, stories and quotes. So for each of the six virtues, we are collecting inspiring references, questions, exercises and activities.

At this moment, *Integriteit deugt II* is still a work in progress, aiming for publication in 2016. So at this stage, helpful comments, additions and references would be greatly appreciated. With your help, integrity management could be taken a step further. For, ultimately, cultivating virtue should not only take place at home and at school, but also at work. Especially if work is the public service.



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