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HANGING AROUND IN SUBURBIA UNDERSTANDING NORMALIZING POWER IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH DUTCH CARIBBEAN MIGRANTS¹

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ABSTRACT

Hangin'g around in suburbia. Understandin'g normalizin'g power in professional relationships with Dutch Caribbean migrants

Professional interventions are rarely successful when used to “normalize” the behaviour of a disruptive group of Dutch-Caribbean migrants. Surprisingly a large number of professionals have not succeeded in assimilating a relatively small group of problematic Dutch-Caribbean migrants.

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Foucault developed a means of analysing power mechanisms, which is essential to understanding how non-conformist groups are turned into “normal” subjects. If, following Foucault, we conceive of professional interventions as power strategies, we may wonder what might undermine their effectiveness. This is part of a broader research question which asks whether Foucault’s description of normalizing power offers sufficient means to describe power strategies as reciprocal interaction. My thesis is that the concept “logics”, as used by Mol, offers tools that are a useful addition to Foucault’s theory. The ways in which Dutch professionals view problematic Dutch-Caribbean migrants and the interventions they use can be described as different logics. This enables us to recognize the similarities and frictions between different practices.

Keywords

Normalizing power, Dutch Caribbeans, Integration, Foucault, Mol

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SAMENVATTING

Rondhangen in de Bloemenwijk. Normaliserende machtsstrategieën in professionele relaties met multiprobleem Antillianen

Professionele interventies die worden gebruikt om het gedrag van een deviante groep Antillianen te “normaliseren” zijn nauwelijks succesvol. Het is verbazingwekkend dat een grote inzet van

professionals nauwelijks leidt tot gedragsveranderingen bij een relatief kleine groep probleem-Antillianen. Foucault heeft geanalyseerd hoe deviante burgers veranderd worden in "normale" subjecten. Als, in deze situatie, de "normalisering" niet lijkt te functioneren, kunnen we ons afvragen welke tegenkrachten er in het spel zijn. Deze vraag maakt deel uit van een bredere onderzoeksvraag: Biedt Foucaults beschrijving van normaliserende macht voldoende middelen om machtsstrategieën te beschrijven als wederzijdse interactie? In dit artikel wil ik laten zien dat het concept "logica's", zoals omschreven door Mol, meer mogelijkheden biedt om de diversiteit en het interactieve karakter van macht in kaart te brengen.

Trefwoorden

Normaliserende macht, Antillianen, Integratie, Foucault, Mol

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Going to the library or the supermarket in the Bloemenwijk², a suburb of the Dutch town of Groningen, where I used to live, I would often encounter a group of young men, mainly from Curaçao, hanging around. They would be talking Papiamentu, a language most Dutch don't understand, and they talk so loudly that people would often wonder if they were arguing. These men were often fixing cars while enjoying loud music from the car radio. They may have been involved in drug dealing, although this was hardly visible and, according to the police, hard to prove too (interview police). I often wondered why they had moved from their sunny island to a rainy square on a Dutch housing estate.

Some questions can be answered by the professionals who work with them. A social worker explained that these men had little education, no job and no money on Curaçao. They had come to the Netherlands because they expected a better life (interview). Because Curaçao is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, its inhabitants are free to migrate. Most men in this group are Creole, descendants of slaves who were transported from Africa to the former Dutch colonies by the Dutch West India Company, run by ancestors of the native Dutch, in order to be sold or to work on the plantations. As such, their forefathers had involuntarily made a significant contribution to Dutch wealth.

White Dutch neighbours in the Bloemenwijk are not amused, however. They do not like the loud music from car radios and some feel threatened by the presence of these men. In a survey

(Kloosterman, 2004) organized by the municipality, this results in a high score for nuisance which is causing the local government to formulate new policies.

The Top 50 Dutch Caribbeans: the professional discourse

Street-corner workers have been hired to make contact with the people of Dutch-Caribbean origin who hang around in the Bloemenwijk and attempt to guide them to a more regular life and behave according to native Dutch middle-class norms, such as getting up early, spending the day in school or at work and so on. Subsequently, the police, social workers, social services, civil servants and the housing office have all been involved in professional interventions focusing on the migrants from Curaçao, who are defined as a particular “problem group”. The social service compiles the Top 50 List, a list of those Dutch-Caribbeans whom they consider to be the most disruptive in the city. To be included on this list, a person must be Caribbean, unemployed, depend on benefits, have debts, and have spent time in prison. The people on the list are often also homeless and lacking an education or a stable relationship. The “Top 50 meeting” is a regular meeting where professionals meet and discuss those whose names appear on the Top 50 List. The organization of this meeting has moved from the social service of the municipality, which focuses on getting people to work, to the “Safety house”, an organization in which different authorities cooperate on detection, prosecution, trial and aid in order to reduce disruption, domestic violence and criminality. As a result, the criteria were changed: being on benefits is no longer a criterion and the approach now focuses on frequent perpetrators. The Caribbeans are not informed that they have been placed on the Top 50 List. They do not know they are the subject of discussions. When the list was compiled, there were about 50 people who met the criteria, but since then the number has fluctuated. Only some of these people live in the Bloemenwijk. On the other hand, not all the people who hang about on the streets of the Bloemenwijk are on the Top 50 List, so the boundaries of this group are not quite clear. A few years later the square in the Bloemenwijk is quiet, but the problems have moved to other streets. In spite of the major investment of money and human resources and the devotion of highly motivated professionals to change the behaviour of this relatively small group, the “Top 50” is still hanging around. Only a few have become learning or working, law-abiding citizens as the professionals had intended. I wonder how it is possible that so much effort can have had such a negligible effect.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In this paper, I want to discuss the professional discourses which are used to legitimize the interventions that were intended to change the behaviour of the “Top 50”³. My thesis is that the

professional practices in this case can partly be conceived of as normalizing power, as described by Foucault (Foucault, 1975a, 1975b, 1976, 2002, 2007). He explains how power strategies are used in order to change deviant individuals into “normal” subjects, who behave according to the dominant norms in society. I want to find out whether the tools offered by Foucault suffice to analyse professional normalization practices or whether additional tools are needed in order to analyse power as a diverse and reciprocal process.

In order to find out how normalizing power strategies work and how they deal with resistance, I was looking for an “exemplary situation”, in which government and professionals invest a lot of effort in “normalizing” power strategies without the intended results. My assumption was that in such a situation, the counter-power, the counter-strategies which are used to oppose normalization, need to be strong. The situation of the “Top 50” seems to be an appropriate example.

This paper presents the results of the first part of this research, in which I will explore how professional practices compare with the professional discourse about multi-problem Dutch Caribbean migrants and about preferred strategies to normalize them. I will also try to explain the relationship between ambiguities in professional practice and professional discourse. In this way I want to open up a way of thinking about the legitimacy of professional discourses.

RESEARCH METHOD

First of all, the data in this part of the research consist of interviews with professionals who work with the multi-problem group of migrants from Curaçao. A second source of data was policy papers from the municipality, professionals and a Dutch-Caribbean Taskforce as well as professional literature, which has been referred to by the professionals as the basis of their professional practice. The interviewees had the following professions: three policemen, one social worker, two street-corner workers, three cultural workers⁴, one policy officer, one area coordinator for the municipality, one coordinator of the “Safety House”, one case manager at the Department of Welfare and one district developer of the Housing Office. The 14 semi-structured interviews took 1 to 1.5 hours each. Both data sources – the interview protocols and the policy papers – were analysed with the qualitative data software Atlas-Ti. In the first analysis, the texts in interviews and policy papers were compared to the different aspects of normalizing power strategies, which have been described by Foucault. In the second analysis, a search was made for coherent professional patterns of thinking and talking in relation to the problem group, which were used in order to explain the intervention of the professionals and the tensions between those patterns.

PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE

Analysing the interviews and documents relating to the Top 50, different rationales were found in the strategies used by professionals involved with this group. These will be described in this section. In the following sections, we will discuss the question of whether Foucault's analysis of normalizing power suffices to understand these practices as normalizing power strategies.

The municipality and the elusive Caribbeans

Towards the end of the 1990s, the municipality of Groningen embarked on a discussion about the position of Dutch-Caribbean migrants, many of whom were living on welfare, had serious drug and alcohol-related problems and were heavily involved with criminality. An extra cause for concern was that institutions like rehabilitation centres, youth care centres and schools found it difficult to tackle the problems of this group. People in the neighbourhood reported in a survey (Kloosterman, 2004) and in contacts with shopkeepers that in their experience, the atmosphere in the neighbourhood was intimidating. According to Kloosterman (2004) these feelings of unease were caused by noisy youngsters loitering in the street and by ignorance of the Caribbean culture. This was considered to be a major factor in the amount of attention that these Caribbean migrants received. "They are not used to that. I think we are just used to, from our country, more uh yes noise or music or whatever kind of disruption than people here in Europe" (interview social worker with Caribbean background). The municipality identified two aims: to reduce the number of people of Caribbean origin living on welfare benefits and to reduce the disruption caused to the native population. In order to achieve these aims, several projects were launched. One of those projects was the Top 50 meeting⁵, a multidisciplinary system of chain support for the most disruptive migrants from Curaçao, in order to prevent their downward slide into social isolation and criminality, and a project to tackle disruption in Bloemenwijk-East. The role of the municipality was to finance and monitor those activities and their effects (Kloosterman, 2004).

The municipality wants to base its policies on statistics and then evaluate the results. Normally, the municipality keeps track of its citizens by registering their place of birth, residency, marital status, children, welfare claims, and so on. For this reason, most citizens are represented in statistics. However, statistical information about the Caribbean target group is unreliable. In several interviews respondents mentioned that those on the Top 50 List were often not registered. Often they would not have independent accommodation, but be living with friends or relatives instead. Without independent accommodation, one is not entitled to an allowance and so there is no point in registering; in fact doing so may even adversely affect the person in whose name the

house is registered because there can be negative consequences for their benefit entitlements. The individuals on the Top 50 List tend to be rather fluid, moving from one place to another, to where other friends and relatives live.

The professional answer to the fluidity of the Top 50 would be better monitoring of who is hanging about on the street, for example by composing a list and exchanging knowledge at the Top 50 meeting. "Often, if you see a Caribbean you don't know, well, I may speak to him, hey, who are you, because I have never seen you before" (interview police officer). If professionals know the Caribbean group, they can recognize them if their faces have been recorded on a security camera, or they can recognize their description. Professionals not only want to know who the Top 50 are, they want mutual interaction as well. Some professionals emphasize the importance of similarity between the Top 50 group and themselves to make contact and recognition easier. One social worker is himself Caribbean and meets his clients in private situations as well; the other is from a different ethnic minority group. One of the police contact officers lived in Curaçao for several years and speaks Papiamentu fluently, which is a great advantage when communicating with migrants from Curaçao, and also when it comes to letting them know that their conversation is being understood. These practices could be summarized as a hide-and-seek game, in which one person hides, because the other is seeking him. The professional task is to produce 'normal' individuals. In Foucault's work (1975a, 1975b) a precondition for disciplinary power is visibility, which is used as a tool to modify deviant behaviour. However, the harder professionals try to control the Top 50, the more elusive they become.

The "tough policeman"

Three policemen have special tasks in managing the disruption caused by the Top 50. Their task is to maintain order and fight crime. In the political discourse of the Netherlands, calls for zero tolerance are growing louder but the police officers believe that in the long run a "soft approach", in which they build closer contacts with the target community, is more effective. In the short run it is possible to prevent disruption and drug dealing using tough police tactics, but according to the policemen who were interviewed the only effect is to push problems elsewhere. If that is the case, it is very difficult to regain control by tracing the offenders. So the police sit in their cars, walk the streets and talk to the Top 50 in order to establish contact. When groups of Dutch-Caribbeans gather in their cars, the policemen sometimes park a recognizable police vehicle in between them, open the windows and turn on some music as an invitation for contact. They expect those who are not out to cause trouble to make contact and others, for example drug dealers, to disappear. Sometimes the police mediate by providing living space or work, or they will talk to an employer

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who has failed to pay a person of Caribbean origin who has done work for him in order to prevent problems and build up a good relationship.

Other professionals are also aware of the ambiguity between promoting safety and reducing disruption on the one hand, while caring for the Top 50 on the other hand. The street-corner workers were hired because the municipality launched a project to reduce complaints about disruption. However, as a theoretical basis for their work they refer to the presence approach (the "Presentiebenadering") (Baart, 2004). This social theory, which is adopted for use in their professional discourse, is based on the philosophy of Levinas. It states that the professional should simply be there and meet others without professional goals. In the everyday work of the street-corner workers of the Bloemenwijk, this is the source of contradiction: they communicate as if they had no ulterior goals and were simply available, while they are in fact paid to reduce disruption. They are trying to accomplish this by encouraging those of Dutch Caribbean origin to contact social workers, to get support on their way to a normal life. So there appears to be a contradiction between theory and practice. In the interviews, the professionals present their work as being predominantly supportive. However, if they want to demonstrate how successful they have been, they point to the number of complaints, which has dropped, and the square, which looks deserted. The intervention team represents another context in which the dilemma of tough control and soft care occurred. Some years ago, several professionals cooperated to make house-to-house visits in a certain postal code area of the Bloemenwijk, to establish whether people needed care and to check whether benefit fraud was being committed. The policy officer of the municipality contrasted the approach of the intervention team in the Bloemenwijk to the strategy which had been taken in Rotterdam, where a group called the "stadsmariniers" (city marine corps) entered houses, if necessary using force. The idea was to make it clear who the boss in the city was. In Groningen the preferred approach was that the professionals would only enter if the resident allowed them in and the main argument was to see whether people could be assisted in any way. The intervention team offered information on benefits and arranged to fix problems in the house, such as broken showers. Not surprisingly, only a few criminal activities were revealed. We can conclude that several professional discourses are ambiguous. Policemen, street-corner workers and the intervention team, present themselves as caring professionals, but on the other hand their goal is to uphold law and order.

Conflicting rights

Most professionals are confronted with dilemmas in their search for an effective approach. They need to achieve their professional goals while respecting the basic freedom of their clients, such

as their right to equal treatment and privacy. The main task of the housing association is to house vulnerable persons and they are responsible for promoting a harmonious living environment for their tenants. This means that they need influence over who is living where. However, to guarantee a fair distribution of houses, the municipality also has a housing allocation system. The housing office used to be able to stop certain houses from being offered to the general public (via the “woningnet” network) and screen people for those houses. However, this kind of labelling has become politically unacceptable. Now, housing associations are not allowed to treat people differently based on their ethnicity since this would be considered discriminatory. Sometimes a housing association may want to offer a house to a person of Dutch-Caribbean origin, to help get him/her off the street and into a more “regular” lifestyle, and sometimes it may prefer to prevent a concentration of too many people of Dutch-Caribbean origin in one area. However, this may be against the regulations. Over time, the regulations have become stricter and making exceptions has become more difficult. Sometimes a way around the regulations can be found, though. If, for instance, it is difficult to relocate a tenant because he has rent protection, the street-corner worker is sometimes asked to talk to a person and convince him to move.

Privacy is another issue. In order to control the behaviour of people of Dutch-Caribbean origin, professionals need to be able to access their private space and in some cases this access is regulated. The district developer of the housing office is allowed to enter all houses which have been rented from his office. According to him, this power can potentially be used to exert pressure on tenants. Also, social services can enter the houses of people who receive benefits. So if there is a situation involving multiple problems, there is always a professional who is entitled to enter the private realm of the individual concerned. Professionals also share a great deal of information – at the Top 50 meetings for example – and permission is not always sought from the clients before this is done. In this instance, effective cooperation runs counter to the right to privacy.

We can conclude that professionals regularly face dilemmas where the respect for privacy and equal treatment run counter to interventions which serve the well-being of the Top 50 and the other inhabitants of the Bloemenwijk.

The identity of the square

The Bloemenwijk was developed in the 1980s as a “cauliflower” residential area – a term that refers to a design in which there are residential precincts and roads radiate in a tree-shaped structure in order to create spaces where neighbours can meet. But in practice, the envisaged effects do not always come to fruition. The public spaces were supposed to be places for everybody, but in fact they became a kind of no-man’s land. Strangely, the only group for which



The Bloemenwijk-East square (picture: Jaap Vis)

the square actually functioned as a meeting place, as envisaged by the town planners, ended up being perceived by other residents as intimidating. One of the strategies for addressing this situation was to change the identity of the square. In several documents, the nursing home and the ageing population in the Bloemenwijk have been identified as a potential counterbalance to the “gangsta” identity of the square. The municipality hopes to change the square into a “service square”, where quiet old people live in the apartments that are now occupied by men belonging to the Top 50. Because of the complaints of neighbours and shopkeepers, the Top 50 have been successfully removed from the square. The traffic situation has also been changed to make drug dealing more difficult. But now people are complaining that the square is “dead”. For example, one shopkeeper commented: “When we were in the middle of criminality and misery, my sales were never as bad as they are now... Customers always want to park in front of the shop, but the number of parking places has been reduced.”⁶

The city council has been trying to plan the housing estate in order to serve the interest of the inhabitants and create a community. Unfortunately the various desires of the people living in

the Bloemenwijk have turned out to be incompatible and the lay-out of the square has had unexpected effects.

Being an individual, a Caribbean or a district resident

In the professional discourse, people of Dutch-Caribbean origin may be conceived of as "autonomous" individuals or as members of a community, either the Dutch-Caribbean community or the community of local residents. Both approaches are found in policy papers and interviews.

Space for everybody

"Space for everybody" is an example of a community-oriented approach. The cultural workers mentioned this project, in which cultural workers, social workers, the municipality and residents cooperated to improve the quality of life in the Bloemenwijk. Special events, such as a music festival, were organized in order to promote contact between members of the community. As we saw in the previous section, the architectural design of the Bloemenwijk was also designed to strengthen the sense of community among its residents. Also, the social worker identifies an aim of his organization as promoting harmony between people in the neighbourhood. He is trying to resolve conflicts by being a kind of mediator. If, for example, some people of Dutch-Caribbean origin are working on their car outside their home, and neighbours are complaining about that, he goes to the neighbours and asks them what exactly the problem is. Then he talks to the people of Dutch-Caribbean origin and tells them there are complaints: "you see, if you are working on your car occasionally, the neighbour would not have a problem, but if ten of your friends are there, shouting, and parking their cars blocking the street, it bothers them. In this way you can often find a compromise" (social worker).

The question remains of whether and how residents in a housing estate like the Bloemenwijk want to belong to a community and if they want to include the most marginal groups there. On the other hand the question is whether those on the Top 50 List actually want membership of the community in the Bloemenwijk. If interventions are "community-oriented", the question becomes how the community is defined. Professionals may describe residents in a certain area simply as residents, but alternatively, they may define all people of Dutch-Caribbean origin as a discreet community. The local and national authorities (Taskforce Antilliaanse Nederlanders, 2008) are trying to involve successful people of Dutch-Caribbean origin in their efforts to make contact with the multi-problem group, but the latter have mixed feelings about this. On the one hand they are involved and able to make contact effectively and motivate people to change. On the other hand, they do not always like to be associated with a problematic group and sometimes they feel used,

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because many people who participate in projects are paid while the Dutch-Caribbean volunteers do not even always have their expenses covered. Another problem is that the Dutch-Caribbean volunteers are trying to motivate men on the Top 50 List to start learning, working and hoping for a better future, while policy changes may put an end to those temporary or subsidized jobs. This leaves the participants empty-handed and threatens the good relations that have been built up with their fellow Dutch-Caribbeans (social worker). One social worker regretted that he has never seen a report in which the Top 50 was described as a step forward for the Bloemenwijk. According to him, everybody has talents and the talents of this group should be recognized too. If the Bloemenwijk really is supposed to be a place for everybody, the positive value of all citizens should be recognized.

Active together

Social Services and Stiel, an organization for community development, are involved in another project, called "Active together"⁷. This project focuses primarily on individuals and aims to activate them, so that they can become more satisfied with their lives (Lammerts, 2000). In this approach, individuals with a non-standard lifestyle are seen as "deviant" and need to be converted to a "normal" way of life. They are motivated to become constructive participants in society instead of choosing the easy way of making money from drug dealing (social services). Policemen (interview) provide coaching to help them find their way and take responsibility for their own lives. The social worker focuses on the group of people who have simply dropped out. He does not harbour the illusion he can help everybody but sometimes he contacts individuals who do not present a direct problem, and by observing them he can see that they may present a potential risk. He might see in a client's eyes that he wants something, but he cannot find words to express this. The social worker then talks about other subjects in order to put him at his ease and the client tells him what is bothering him. Sometimes he portrays a doom scenario for the future if the client continues to live on welfare and contrasts this with the advantages of working and using his talents (street-corner work). The social workers try to make the Top 50 think: "I must make something out of my life and if I don't, I will be nothing".

We can conclude that both the discourses and the practices may vary when professionals talk about either individuals or communities.

NORMALIZING POWER

The way that Foucault (1975a, b) analyses disciplinary power can provide an effective way to understand how professionals handle a "deviant" group of migrants. In the model of power

as described by Foucault, power is imminent, anonymous and it can be found in many places. Power is not repressive, but the modern subject is constructed by power mechanisms (Devos, 2004). We can recognize this in the way professionals work with the Top 50. A precondition for disciplinary power is visibility, which is asymmetrical. The subject is visible and he knows that he may be observed, but he cannot see those who are observing him. The Top 50 is not in a closed space, like a prison or an asylum, as in Foucault's description of disciplinary power. Nevertheless, the municipality and professionals in the Bloemenwijk go to great lengths to convert an elusive and anonymous group into individuals who are known and visible, which is a precondition for control. They create differences between individuals, for example by offering houses outside the group space. They apply normalizing sanctions: rewards such as job offers and punishments for criminal activities or other transgressions. Also, the physical surroundings are part of strategies which shape the behaviour of subjects. Foucault's toolbox turns out to have some serious limitations however, which may prevent a full understanding of the variety and interactivity of power processes. First of all he does not offer a fully developed description of resistance, which could explain the reactions of the Top 50 to the normalizing practices; and second his analysis does not provide an adequate means of dealing with the relations between different discourses.

Conduct and counter-conduct

According to Foucault (1976), resistance is coextensive and absolutely contemporaneous to power: "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (p.125). Power is a strategic game, which is part of a relationship (Foucault; in Bess, 1980).

Power should not be understood as an oppressive system bearing down on individuals from above, smiting them with prohibitions of this or that. Power is a set of relations. What does it mean to exercise power? It does not mean picking up this tape recorder and throwing it on the ground... I would not be exercising power if I did that. However, if I take this tape recorder and throw it on the ground in order to make you mad, or so that you can't repeat what I've said, or to put pressure on you so that you'll behave in such and such a way, or to intimidate you. Well, what I've done is shaping your behaviour through certain means, that is power... I'm not forcing you at all and I'm leaving you completely free...

[Power] takes place when there is a relation between two free subjects, and this relation is unbalanced, so that one can act upon the other, and the other is acted upon, or allows himself

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to be acted upon. Therefore, power is not always repressive. It can take a certain number of forms. And it is possible to have relations of power that are open.

Foucault differentiates between power and domination. If resistance is impossible, power becomes domination, an asymmetrical and fixed relationship. Power is a force which is exercised in a strategic field on many different points and in many different ways. It can take many forms, such as ideological manipulation, rational argumentation, economic exploitation or moral advice (Lemke, 2002). To oppose power, the counterforce cannot just be the reverse. It must be as flexible, multiple and inventive as the power it counters. Foucault makes this clear by choosing the concepts of conduct and counterconduct. Conduct (*conduit*) is the activity of conducting others, with more or less coercion, the way in which one conducts oneself and the way in which one behaves under the influence of the conduct which others exercise. Power or conduct structures the field of possible actions for an actor. Counterconduct changes this field and opens a new possible field of action. Foucault did not describe how counterconduct works, however. The power strategies he describes are all part of a coherent strategy. As such power is presented as one dominant structure, which creates subjects. However, in the Top-50 case we can see different practices, which are not always coherent.

Different logics

The Actor Network Theory (Latour, 2005) and especially the work of Mol (1999, 2008), may complement the problems signalled in Foucault's disciplinary power model. Latour's work provides more opportunities for variety. He proposes studying local situations that are composed of chains of events. As networks in which persons and objects are the nodal points, or, in Latour's vocabulary, the actants. From his local point of view, the researcher makes connections to other points, which are further away. This may be compared to the ideal of "thick description", in which empirical philosophy takes over from ethnography (Geertz, 1973) and semiotics (Gabriëls, 2000), a method in which practices are described as detailed as possible. The actors in this network have agency, the capacity to change other actors. Actants have a programme or script which is directed to influence the behaviour of other actants. The actants can follow this script, but they can also develop an anti-programme. Thus a two-way process can be described, whereby Actor Network Theory enables a description of the interaction between professional practices and practices of the Top 50.

Mol (2008) elaborates the analysis of a multiple reality further. As well as the concept "discourse", which plays a prominent role in Foucault's work, she presents an alternative concept, "logic":

"In a logic, words, materialities and practices hang together in a specific, historically and culturally situated way" (Mol, 2008, p.8).

Foucault analyses how a discourse differentiates between the normal and the abnormal (Foucault, 1975a). The dominant discourse determines what, in a specific period, will be considered as normal and this leads to processes of exclusion and disciplining. Normal subjects are constructed, but "The accomplishment to behave more or less normal also implies a loss" (Grunberg, 2011, p.V7).

Mol (2008, p.8) introduces a new concept, because she is concerned with: "neither the ways in which socio-material orderings come into being and establish themselves, nor with the power involved in that process. Instead I am after the rationality or rather the rationale of the practices I am studying". In her work, logic is the "local, fragile and yet pertinent coherence" (Mol, 2008, p.8) of what is the rational thing to do in a specific situation.

A logic can be constructed by analysing how people talk and write texts about their situation, by observing their behaviour and by studying their relationship with their environment. It may be implicit in practices, but if one wants to discuss it, it should be made explicit.

The Actor Network Theory builds on the work of Foucault. It offers more scope to describe a multiform reality in which different practices can be distinguished, not only between different groups of actors, but also as different options for one person. One difference between a discourse and a logic is that different logics may be active at the same time, where there is always one dominant discourse. Another aspect in the construction of logics is that the actors are co-researchers (Mol, 2008). Describing their logics may help people to reflect on their situation and possibly change it.

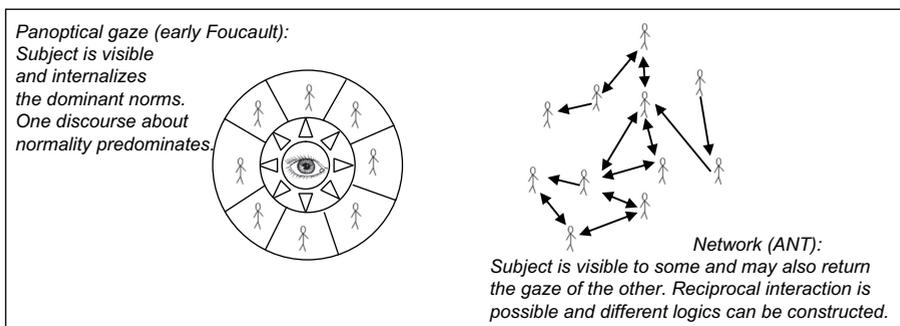


Figure 1: Visibility and power relationships.

CONCLUSION: DIFFERENT LOGICS IN BLOEMENWIJK-EAST

Following Mol, professional practices can be understood as different logics, different meaningful coherent sets of thoughts and actions, within which a specific practice makes sense. So far at least four logics can be distinguished:

- *Individual care logic*: Under the individual care logic, the individuals should be active in shaping their own life. If they do not succeed, the professional is there for vulnerable people, such as the Dutch-Caribbean group with multiple problems. The relationship between clients and professionals becomes a central tool in the development of the client towards an autonomous life, in which he can take care of himself. If he continues to rely on welfare, a doom scenario is described.
- *Community care logic*: Under the community care logic, belonging to the community is the main goal. In this logic people are no longer only individuals. They are united, based on the fact that they live in the same neighbourhood, or that they come from the same far away island. People are responsible for each other and for their own environment. Anomie is to be avoided and people should share norms and values. The authorities encourage people to take on their responsibilities and organize community-building activities.
- *Security logic*: The security logic is not about inclusion but about protection. The differences between people are emphasized. People should be able to live peacefully with like-minded others, who have the same rules, and people who do not fit in should change their behaviour or leave. Under this logic, words like "war on drugs", "city marine corps" or "fighting crime", which are reminiscent of war, may be used.
- *"Change the mindset" logic*: The fourth logic was found in a document which was published by a Caribbean Taskforce (Taskforce Antilliaanse Nederlanders, 2008), which advises about the approach of Caribbean multi-problem men. This can be seen in the statement, made by a social worker, that it is remarkable that nobody ever values the Caribbean Top 50 as step forward for society. The Taskforce argues that the other three logics are superficial and therefore not effective. They take no account of the past, when the ancestors of the Dutch Caribbean community were forcibly transported from Africa by Dutch people as slaves. Neither do they take into account the poverty culture, which is brought about partly by exploitative practices by Dutch employers and which the Dutch Caribbean community has been the victim of for generations. In this way, the image shifts. This leads to different proposals for interventions, such as improving the economic situation in Curaçao and recognizing the history of slavery.

In the professional practices in the Bloemenwijk, elements of all these logics are present, and in each logic the Top 50 List People of Dutch-Caribbean origin have a different place:

- According to the individual care logic, they are defined as individuals, who, due to an accumulation of problems, are temporarily unable to lead an autonomous life and need professional support.
- According to the community care logic, they are part of a Caribbean community and the bonds with this community are the tools for recovery.
- The security logic defines them as a threat to the security of “normal” people. They should be controlled or removed in order to restore safety.
- The “change the mindset” logic identifies them as part of the wider Dutch community, in which they belong to an underprivileged group, and their behaviour is described as the result of a historical development, in which their ancestors have been abused. According to this logic, the interventions are not necessarily directed to the Top 50 personally, but rehabilitation and a brighter economic situation may improve the conditions in which they make a living.

The relationships between logics may differ. They may exclude or complement each other. Sometimes different professionals use different logics. Conflicting logics may even be present within one practice. The intervention team, for example, is presented as an individual care strategy, in order to help people to get what they are entitled to. However, in the meantime, the team also tries to monitor for fraudulent behaviour, which is a practice under the security logic. The street-corner workers explain their approach by referring to the “Presence” theory, which is an individual care approach. However, they are employed in a project which aims at stopping the disruption in the Bloemenwijk, which fits into the security logic.

DISCUSSION

In order to discover the interactivity between the different logics, we need additional information from the Top 50 and other actors in the Bloemenwijk-East network. More interviews will provide more information. They will bring us closer to the ideal of a “thick description” and a better understanding of power strategies in a specific network.

The situation in the Bloemenwijk may be exemplary for other contemporary western housing-estates, where people from different cultural backgrounds meet and different definitions of “normal behaviour” may clash. Nevertheless, we cannot generalize from this particular practice to

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other practices, however “thickly” this particular practice can be described. Other situations may have some similarities, but also differences, due to connections with other actants.

The subjectivity of the researcher is always present in this type of research, although the analysis has been discussed with others in order to create more intersubjectivity. Both the theoretical context in which the research is situated and the personal characteristics of the researcher, such as her age, gender, ethnicity and social position, influence the places to which she will have access, the stories people tell and what they conceal.

Another limitation of this research lies in the fact that it is based on policy papers and interviews. The spoken and written intentions of the professionals may differ from their practices. Additional participant observation may be useful.

This research project is not directed at the development of new interventions or the presentation of an objective description of a specific problem group and the effectiveness of different approaches towards this group. The main aim is to develop a way of understanding practices, in which there is scope for diversity and interactivity. This may make it easier to think and talk about those practices.

NOTES

- 1 Choosing a name for a specific ethnic group is often a sensitive issue. This article is about a number of men who were born on one of the Dutch Caribbean islands, mostly Curaçao. This island used to be part of the Dutch Antilles, but since October 10, 2010 its status has been changed into a country within the Dutch Kingdom. This article analyses professional discourses. Therefore I have chosen a term which is as close as possible to the Dutch terms used by professionals and in policy papers. Here they are referred to as “Antillianen” or “Caribische Nederlanders”. The closest and most contemporary translation seems to be “Dutch Caribbeanans”. In order to avoid stigmatization of all people from the Caribbean islands which belong to the Dutch Kingdom, the men who are described in this article are also referred to as “Top 50”, a label which is being used by the professionals.
- 2 Because of confidentiality reasons, the name of the housing estate has been changed into a pseudonym.
- 3 This question is part of my ongoing PhD research, in empirical philosophy, on normalizing power. I am exploring the interaction between normalizing power strategies and the counter-strategies which are used by subjects who deviate from dominant norms. The Top 50 is used as an empirical case study. The next step in this case study will be to interview

the Top 50, their relatives and friends and the people who live around the square Bloemenwijk-East. The stories of the different groups involved will be compared in order to analyse their influence on one another. The case will be used to explore how we can think about power and counter-power in contemporary society.

- 4 In the interview citations both the social worker, the cultural workers and the street-corner workers are referred to as "social workers" in order to limit their identifiability and to concur with the international description of the profession.
- 5 Professionals referred to the "Top 50", both as a consultative body about specific people of Dutch-Caribbean origin, as a list of these people and as a name for these people of Dutch-Caribbean origin.
- 6 Dagblad van het Noorden, 11-4-2008, *Winkelplein B** 'mooi maar leeg'*.
In: <http://www.dvhn.nl/nieuws/noorden/stad/article3378308.ece/Winkelplein-B-'mooi-maar-leeg'#articleComments>, consulted on 19-3-2010.
- 7 www.stiel.nl

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