

# Reconsidering the tension between bureaucracy and professionalism in publicly and privately funded schools

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This article sheds new light on the so-called ‘natural tension’ between bureaucracy and professionalism in schools. As it is quite common in the educational field to appoint teachers, it is debatable whether the assumed tension really exists. It seems more reasonable to find hierarchical control *within* the professional group. This notion forces to discuss the professional bureaucracy antagonism and to examine the interplay between teachers and managers within schools more concretely. The presented findings are based on a recent empiric study that compared the interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools.

**Keywords:** *professionals; teaching profession; middle-managers; educational leadership; school organisation*

## Introduction

Does the tension between professionals (teachers) and bureaucrats (school administrators) really exist? A retrospective survey of two decades of firm educational reforms in the Netherlands reveals major changes within the school organisation. Teachers and school administrators have often been the subject of these educational reforms. Attempts to enhance school autonomy, an increase in scale, the policy of decentralising the management of budgets and staffing have affected the nature of teachers’ and administrators’ professions. Consequently the interplay between teachers and administrators has also changed. Since the organisational context has strongly influenced teachers’ and administrators’ professions, the spotlight in this article is on the organisational context of the professionalism of teachers and managers. Drawing on a recent quantitative and qualitative study in the Dutch Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, this paper reveals the need to reconsider and re-examine the often assumed tension between professionals (teachers) and bureaucrats (school administrators) (see e.g. Mintzberg 1979; Hoyle 1980, 1986; Hanson 2001).

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**Teaching as a profession?**

Noordegraaf (2007) defines pure professionalism as ‘controlled content’ sustained by two pillars. The ‘content’ pillar is rational and ethical and concerns knowledge, skills, experience, ethics and appearance. The ‘control’ pillar is political and social and can be described in terms of association, jurisdiction, knowledge transfer, codes and supervision. This model of pure professionalism leans strongly on the classic model of professionalism (Wilensky 1964).

Wilensky (1964) differentiated two barriers to classic or pure professionalisation. The first barrier concerns the knowledge bases which threaten the exclusive jurisdiction of a profession. In the 1970s Haug (1976, 1988) interpreted this threat to professionalism as de-professionalisation. She described the erosion of the sacred position of professionals as a result of higher levels of education, ICT developments and the emancipation of the individual. When applied to the teaching profession, de-professionalisation signifies that teachers have lost their traditional monopoly on transferring knowledge and fostering settings in which learning occurs, due to the increased accessibility of information. The circumstances in which teachers work and the demands made on them have changed as communication technologies have eroded the role of the teacher as the exclusive holder of expert knowledge (Day 1999).

The organisational context is the second barrier to professionalisation that Wilensky identifies, since it weakens both the service ideal and professional autonomy. The traditional view of the professions is that ‘they are largely free of the hierarchical forms of social control characteristic of other kinds of occupations; instead, they are self-regulating, subject only to informal collegial control’ (Freidson 1984, 1). According to Wilensky (1964) organisational context also weakens this professional autonomy since organisations develop their own controls and hierarchies in which the salaried professional must accept the ultimate authority of non-professionals in the assessment of both process and product.

Taking into account the barriers to professionalism mentioned above, we conclude that the teaching profession has never really manifested the features of the classic model of professionalism in the Netherlands. The autonomy of teachers has always been subjected to control by governments, school boards and management. These regulations have consistently provided teachers with status and a certain degree of protection. Dutch teachers were already salaried in the eighteenth century and subject to government regulations on their competences and qualifications (Karsten 2000). Since then the Dutch state has become increasingly involved in determining how the teaching profession should be conducted. Government regulations on teaching qualifications and the content of curricula and exams, as well as the public financing of schools, meant that teachers were subjected to external interference and codes of professional conduct.

In recent decades the control by pupils and their parents has been reinforced (consumer control) by the introduction of cost-based and client-based managerialism and a number of market mechanisms (Hooge and Honingh 2004). As a result of decentralisation and the increasing autonomy of schools, school boards can exercise

more professional control on teachers than before by gaining more control of their own budget, personnel, administrative and organisational policies. A side effect of these administrative changes was that central government regulated teachers' influence on the content and goals of teaching more strongly than before (Hooge 1998). Consequently, teachers were not aware of the pressure to protect themselves and their profession against unqualified staff. Moreover, in recent decades so-called non-professional occupational workers (Noordegraaf 2007), such as project managers, quality managers, policy-makers and non-teaching staff, have been introduced into schools, who also exert professional control on the teaching profession. In other words, the Dutch teaching profession has never really established its own professional control (Freidson 2001), or occupational closure (Abbott 1988), since it has always enjoyed the protection of professional control by central government and/or by school boards, executive managers and non-professional occupational workers.

The status of the teaching profession has often been criticised (e.g. Day 1999). With the classic model in mind Wilensky describes school teachers as being on the borderline of professional status (1964, 142). Teachers are referred to as minor professionals (Glazer 1974), knowledge workers and semi-professionals or quasi-professionals (Etzioni 1969). Teachers can be considered professionals in terms of their professional training, of applying 'somewhat abstract knowledge' (Abbot 1988), and of being subject to collegial control. However, they do not construct their own academic knowledge, do not have a professional code and do not have a pure professional-client relationship, as they work with groups (Slegers 1991; Day 1999), and in this sense cannot be seen as professionals.

In summary, trying to establish the contours of teaching as a profession within the organisational context, it can be concluded that Dutch teachers operate in a strongly controlled and regulated organisational context which weakens both the service ideal and the autonomy of their profession. The Dutch teaching profession has never really established its own professional control or its occupational closure. It is, therefore, not surprising that the status of the teaching profession has often been criticised; it cannot be seen as a pure or classic profession.

### **New Professionalism**

The impact of the changing economic, social and knowledge contexts on the educational service as a whole required teachers to move from the autonomous-professional model to the social-market model (Day 1999). This meant that teachers increasingly needed to adapt and adjust to meet customers' wishes, quality standards, government directives and, last but not least, what is best in teachers' own view. Coping with all sorts of demands seemed to cause increased ambiguity and complexity within the teaching profession. Consequently, the teaching profession could no longer function in isolation and became more deeply embedded in schools' organisational context.

Since the 1990s the concept of New Professionalism has been applied to teaching as a profession (Hargreaves 1994; Hoyle 1995; Caldwell and Spinks 1998; Noordegraaf 2007). New Professionalism defines the teaching profession in terms of organisational context. In fact it turns the teaching profession into ‘an organizational profession that primarily faces organizational control’ (Noordegraaf 2007, 763). New Professionalism stresses the connection between the teaching profession and the school organisation by stating that ‘there is little significant school development without teacher development and vice versa’ (Hargreaves 1994, 436). According to Hoyle (1995), New Professionalism implies a big shift in the concept of the teaching profession, which is presented in Table 1.

The ideal of New Professionalism replaces the traditional autonomous expertise with inter-professional collaboration and shared responsibility, but favours the traditional *service ideal* by emphasising learning outcomes. Collective as opposed to individual professional autonomy has become a central feature. Collaboration and shared responsibility are key elements of New Professionalism and are seen as professional and institutional development. However, the concept of New Professionalism has also been criticised. Stronach and MacLure (1997) argue that the new managerial structures serve to de-professionalise rather than empower the teaching profession, and that by no means all of teachers’ development needs can be located in or arise from institutional contexts. Hoyle (2001) argues that there is no indication that ‘New Professionalism’ would improve the prestige, status or esteem of teaching as an occupation – at least not in the way it has been translated in recent educational policy.

To recapitulate, purely professional or not, the new perspective that has emerged on the teaching profession, ‘New Professionalism’, requires the teaching profession to be studied within the context of the school organisation. Adopting the organisational context as a point of reference features a major change in the research on teachers and their profession. In fact, the threats and barriers to professionalisation Wilensky

Table 1. Trends in the teaching profession.

From	To
Profession	Professional
Knowledge	Skill
Education	Training
Effectiveness	Efficiency
Conception	Delivery
Status	Contract
Clients	Consumers
Influence	Compliance
Responsibility	Accountability
Leadership	Management

Source: Hoyle (1995, 60).

identified are due to this major shift, which is considered to be a crucial point of reference. This conclusion brings us back to the so-called 'natural tension' between organisational control and professional control.

### **The tension between bureaucracy and professionalism in schools**

The so-called 'natural tension' between organisational control and professional control has often been the subject of academic research (Wilensky 1964; Freidson 1984). In order to deal with this natural tension or, when it is stronger, clash between bureaucracy and professionalism, organisational structures and features have emerged that accommodate their professionals such as professional bureaucracy (Mintzberg 1979), organised anarchy (Cohen et al. 1972) or loose coupling (Weick 1976, 1982).

Hoyle (1980, 1986) considers the bureaucratic-professional conflict a useful heuristic in analysing power and influence in schools. Much negotiation and interaction is necessary in schools because of the lack of a command structure. This negotiation occurs in highly subtle and informal ways. Hoyle (1980) introduces the concept of extended professionalism of teachers as a method of negotiating and exchanging interests. Teachers with an extended orientation are willing to focus not only on the classroom but also on the school organisation and have a wider range of teaching interests, in contrast to teachers with a restricted orientation who focus primarily on pedagogical content, subject matter and their own teaching activities in the classroom. Current educational policy asks teachers to fulfil an extended professionalism by emphasising their collective responsibility, the importance of collaboration between teachers, and their participation in the school decision-making process. This is not only assumed to have a positive impact on the improvement of teachers' own practice, but also to increase teachers' commitment to a complex and demanding work context and enable schools to use the greater room for manoeuvre for their own policy-making (Van Veen et al. 2001).

Hanson (2001) also uses the bureaucratic-professional conflict to analyse the decision-making processes by school administrators and teachers in schools. He introduced the Interacting Spheres Model, which contains an administrators' zone, a teachers' zone and a contested zone. The contested zone deals with key issues, such as how decisions are made, how collaborative actions are structured and how problems are solved. The agreements in the contested zone are usually temporary and fragile, and subject to renegotiation. Hanson applies the loosely coupled system theory of Weick (1976, 1982) to illustrate that coupling between subsystems takes place within the contested zone.

The models of Hoyle and Hanson illustrate how the tension between bureaucracy and professionalism is being dealt with in schools, namely mainly by negotiation between the school management (school leaders, principals, heads, middle managers) representing bureaucracy and teachers representing professionalism, thereby avoiding a command structure. However, an important question arises here: do

school managers really represent bureaucracy? If they do, do they *only* represent bureaucracy? This question stems from the fact that it is customary in education to appoint former teachers as educational managers. ‘Principals and superintendents usually have had training as teachers and experience in classroom teaching’ (Freidson 1984, 17). Such managers are called ‘professional managers’, which means they have not been trained as managers, but are qualified professionals. Professional managers contrast with ‘lay managers’, who have often been trained as managers, but lack expertise and qualifications in their subordinates’ profession or discipline.

The phenomenon of professional managers in education implies that educational managers are former colleagues of their subordinates (teachers). They not only represent bureaucracy but also have teaching expertise and qualifications. ‘A problem with the simple bureaucratic–professional dichotomy is that in the case of the school we cannot label the head as a bureaucrat and the teacher as a professional. The head, too, is a professional . . . . Thus many potential conflicts in the schools are not between bureaucracy and professionalism but between *competing professional judgments*’ (Hoyle 1986, 83).

According to Freidson (1984) this idea of competing professional judgements in schools is a threat to the professionalism of teachers. Freidson refers to this threat as corporatisation and argues that the traditional freedom of hierarchical forms, self-regulation and informal collegial control, which are so distinctive from classic or pure professionalism, have changed into formal hierarchical control *within* the professional group. This formalisation of professional control is characterised by professionals who control the members of their own professional group.

To complicate matters further, there is a tendency for school managers to professionalise themselves. Like their colleagues in many countries around the world, Dutch educational managers and governors are becoming members of professional organisations. These associations imitate classic professions by providing training and schooling, introducing a code of conduct (governance codes), publishing periodicals and books, and organising information exchange and peer learning. These professional organisations for educational managers and governors are flourishing. Remarkably, these institutions for managers seem to be more dynamic and are functioning better than teachers’ equivalents. The latter are less effective because of the multiple sectors and disciplinary branches in education. Noordegraaf (2007) asserts that those ‘who restructure and weaken professionals’ control in service delivery are themselves trying to become professionals’ (776).

The two aforementioned notions concerning hierarchical control *within* the professional group leading to competing professional judgements, as well as the tendency in education of appointing professional managers, both reduce the importance of the professional–bureaucracy clash in schools. Therefore, it might be more suitable to speak of a clash within the profession *between professionals who differ in task and rank*.

Recent data collected in 2005 on the organisational behaviour of teachers and middle managers in schools in the Dutch VET sector show that middle managers in

Table 2. Managers in publicly and privately funded schools.

	Publicly funded	Privately funded
Professional managers	86.6%	54.6%
Lay managers	13.3%	45.4%

Source: Honingh (2008).

privately funded schools are more often lay managers than in publicly funded schools (see Table 2).

The data presented provide an opportunity to investigate whether the interplay between teachers and professional and lay managers in publicly and privately funded schools differ. On the basis of these findings the following question has been formulated: *Does the interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools differ, and if so, in what terms?*

### Research context and method

The findings reported in this section are the final part of a study on the organisational behaviour of teachers and middle managers in Dutch schools for VET, which has been reported in Honingh and Karsten (2007), Honingh (2008) and Honingh and Oort (2009). The main study examined and compared attitudes, behaviour and perceptions of teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools.<sup>1</sup> All of the teachers and middle managers in the study were responsible for education in the fields of economics and administration, catering and tourism, or health and social care in senior secondary schools in the Dutch VET sector. To compare the organisational behaviour of teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools, multilevel analyses and one-way variance analyses were performed. Furthermore, typologies of teachers' attitudes towards education and middle managers' entrepreneurship were constructed (see Honingh 2008; Honingh and Oort 2009).

To interpret and contextualise the outcomes of the comparative empirical study carried out in 2005 it was necessary to collect qualitative data on teachers' and middle managers' perceptions and their organisational behaviour. Correlations based on statistical analyses often do not provide sufficient evidence, since the interpretation of results can be delicate due to the causality inversion and the presence of disruptive factors (Hutjes and Van Buuren 1992; Miles and Huberman 1994). These factors might, for example, suppress existing correlations and neglected factors might affect dependent variables. To verify whether the outcomes in the quantitative study were correctly ascribed to the independent variables and predictor variables, we carried out a member check. A member check involves asking respondents whether they agree with the descriptions, interpretations and conclusions and is based on the idea that only the human objects of research are able to judge the researchers' interpretations

(Yin 1984; Firestone 1993; Miles and Huberman 1994; Swanborn 1996). Despite some critical remarks on this approach, such as researcher bias, the truthfulness of respondents' opinions and respondents' personal interest in the outcomes, a member check does offer deeper insight into different interpretations (Swanborn 1996). Adopting a member-check approach in this project enabled us to increase the internal validity of the quantitative analysis with a view to gaining greater understanding of the context and illustrating the complexity of teachers' and middle managers' position and their roles in the school organisation.

We contacted all the middle managers ( $n=79$ ), who had participated in the quantitative study by email as well as by post to invite them to participate in round-table discussions on the results of the quantitative study. The middle managers were asked to invite their teachers to participate in this study as well. Due to low response rates it was also necessary to contact teachers and middle managers by telephone. These telephone calls revealed substantial job mobility among middle managers. A large number of the middle managers who participated in 2005 had since retired, left the school or moved to other disciplinary branches in the school. The telephone calls also revealed that the middle managers were not very enthusiastic about informing their teachers of the round-table discussions. Ultimately, 11 middle managers working in six different schools and seven teachers from two schools participated in the discussions. Middle managers and teachers were interviewed in two separate round-table discussions. Both discussions started with a short presentation on the outcomes of the quantitative study, followed by a step-by-step discussion on the statistical correlations found in the quantitative study for all of the dependent variables. The respondents were first asked to indicate whether the results of the quantitative study were applicable to the situation in their school and to themselves. Second, the respondents were asked whether the findings needed further specification or a more specific context. Third, they were asked whether other factors that were not included in the study also affect the results (outcomes). The reported findings provide answers to the four research questions. In addition, we point out a number of differences and similarities between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools. These results are of particular interest with a view to acquiring a better understanding of the interplay between teachers and middle managers.

Before answering the central question it is necessary to focus on the differences between the two types of managers, on teachers' perceptions of their managers and on differences between teachers' appointments in publicly and privately funded schools.

### **Differences between professional and lay managers**

Theoretically, lay managers are trained as managers while professional managers are not. The outcomes of the round-table discussions showed the differentiation between both types to be less rigid nowadays. Middle managers demonstrated that they were



professionalising themselves as managers. All of the professional middle managers had received some training or even followed a complete management course, either before or at some stage in their management job. Moreover, a number of the middle managers still receive personal coaching to discuss and reflect on their own functioning. Evaluating the necessity for and benefit of training and courses, the middle managers emphasised specific knowledge, expertise and competences that are essential to fulfil a management position. They particularly appreciated situational training and considered it to be extremely useful. Reflecting on the trend of professional managers to professionalise themselves does raise a number of questions about similarities and differences in the behaviour and attitudes of professional managers and lay managers.

When comparing the time middle managers spend on developing and implementing policy, personnel, innovation, education-related tasks and finances, Honingh (2008) did not find differences between middle managers with teaching experience and those without. This was also the case when analysing middle managers' attitudes to education (see also Honingh 2008); the lay and professional middle managers did not report differences in their attitudes to education. Discussing these research outcomes during the round-table discussion with middle managers offered a slightly different, new perspective on the outcomes. In contrast to the quantitative results, the respondents asserted that middle managers with and middle managers without teaching experience do differ in their personal attitudes to education. For example, middle managers without teaching experience are less familiar with a typical school culture based on having time and space for students and being patient with them. Consequently, such managers tend to regard less successful students as having fewer opportunities and perspectives on the labour market, while managers with teaching experience are more prepared to offer such students a number of chances and time to develop. The culture of change described features a stronger orientation on the learning process and educational outcomes than on operational goals such as diplomas. Both these orientations reveal a distinction between middle managers' professional judgements concerning the school and its primary purposes. These findings raise a number of questions about the manner in which teachers perceive both types of managers.

### **Teachers' perceptions**

The outcomes of the multi-level regression analysis, which showed that the predictor 'having teaching experience' at management level did not affect teachers' organisational behaviour (Honingh 2008), had been discussed with teachers. Evaluating these outcomes with teachers offered a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences with middle managers and their perceptions of middle managers with and without teaching experience. Teachers found it difficult to specify precisely the effects that middle managers might have on their organisational behaviour. Generally, it seems that teachers find it easier to rely on middle managers who are familiar with teaching and

know what it is like to be a teacher. Sharing these teaching experiences seems to be a crucial factor in teachers accepting middle managers. Furthermore, teachers appreciate middle managers who are willing to discuss educational matters and not only focus on strategies and operational goals. Showing interest in pupils, pupils' development and the teaching process also contributes to the perception of management support.

On the other hand, teachers described problems with former teachers who are incapable of managing and organising. It is not possible to detect a clear preference for lay or professional managers in these findings. Nevertheless, they do show, first, that teachers find it important that managers are capable of managing and, second, that they appreciate middle managers who show an interest in the primary process and the development of pupils as well.

Middle managers were also asked to react to the results of the teacher-management multi-level analyses. It is noteworthy that middle managers' reactions to the findings are quite similar to those of teachers. Middle managers asserted that having teaching experience might be a 'plus', since teachers sometimes seem to trust middle managers with teaching experience more readily. However, being a former teacher should not be regarded as a guarantee for success. Sharing teaching experiences might affect the interplay between teachers and middle managers but it is, according to these managers, only one aspect of the complex interplay between teachers and themselves. Furthermore, the disciplinary branches in which teachers work and the composition of teacher teams seem to be relevant as well.

### **Teachers' appointments in publicly and privately funded schools**

Focusing on teachers' appointments and the division of tasks within schools sheds new light on the interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools and reveals a number of dissimilarities between both groups of teachers. Drawing a comparison between teachers in publicly and privately funded schools first of all shows differences in the appointment of teachers. The quantitative study investigating 730 teachers showed that the teachers' contracts of employment in publicly and privately funded schools differ. In publicly funded schools 99% ( $n = 722$ ) of teachers are permanently employed, whereas this is the case in only 40% ( $n = 10$ ) of the privately funded schools.<sup>2</sup> The other 60% of these teachers work on a contract basis.

Working on a contract basis seems, first, to promote courtesy between middle managers and teachers. The underlying mechanism of working on a contract basis forces teachers as well as managers to consider regularly whether they are willing to sign or offer a new contract. Consequently, both parties perceive a certain sense of interdependency. Managers realise that they depend on good teachers to provide education, which is the schools' core business. As a result this sense of interdependency encourages them to treat their teachers respectfully and considerately and also to be supportive. Teachers on the other hand are challenged to

perform well to assure themselves of a future contract. In addition, teachers can decide on the basis of their experiences whether they want to continue working in a school organisation that offers them a sense of freedom. Altogether the mechanisms that are associated with working on a contract basis differ from the mechanisms and dynamics that emerge in an organisation with paid employees.

In publicly funded schools with a large proportion of paid employees, the need to be courteous is sometimes hardly felt at all. One of the teachers explained that he sometimes felt that he was treated as if he were 'a piece of furniture that is just always there'. This guaranteed presence does not encourage managers to treat their teachers with consideration and courtesy. This contrasts strongly with teachers in privately funded schools who feel appreciated if their contract is renewed.

Another striking and significant difference between teachers in publicly and privately funded schools is the time spent on non-educational tasks (see Honingh 2008). In the publicly funded schools, 37% of the teachers spend more than 11 hours a week on non-educational tasks, as opposed to 8% in the privately funded schools. It is also significant that 36% of the teachers in privately funded school do not spend a single hour a week on non-educational tasks. On the basis of these data it seems valid to conclude that the division between educational tasks and non-educational tasks is more precisely defined in privately funded schools than in publicly funded schools. Asking respondents to react to these findings during the round-table discussions provided a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences. In general it can be concluded that agreements on duties and tasks are more clearly described and better defined in privately funded schools, which is also related to their employment contracts. Most of the contract teachers develop educational materials, teach a number of classes, offer students feedback and assess their assignments and tests. All of these tasks are part of the primary educational process. Teachers in privately funded schools therefore know exactly what they are expected to do whereas those in publicly funded schools are often uncertain and unclear about their responsibilities and duties. On the basis of the discussions with teachers it became clear that teachers in publicly funded schools are confronted with a lack of clarity and unpredictable reactions from their middle managers. Moreover, it is relevant to note a difference in the level of autonomy teachers enjoy in privately and publicly funded schools. Middle managers in privately funded schools offer teachers more professional autonomy than in publicly funded schools to fulfil their educational duties without intervening. Teachers therefore perceive middle managers as unpredictable in publicly funded schools. Consequently it is unclear to them whether they have the space and autonomy to make decisions or whether they have to ask middle managers for permission or advice. Summarising the above, one can note a number of remarkable dissimilarities between publicly and privately funded schools in the extent to which teachers have an extended or restricted range of tasks to fulfil.

### The interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools

Having described some of the differences between managers in publicly and privately funded schools, teachers' appointments in both school types and teachers' perceptions of their manager, we will combine the results and focus on the central question of this article: *Does the interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly and privately funded schools differ, and if so, in what terms?* The outcomes mentioned above already shown a number of differences between teachers and middle managers in public and private schools as well as between professional and lay managers. Bringing all of the results together (see Table 3) reveals two distinctive profiles.

The interplay between teachers and middle managers in publicly funded schools is referred to as the 'hierarchy' within the professional group, a term Freidson (1984) introduced. Middle managers and teachers are both involved in management tasks as well as in teaching and teaching-related tasks. Since the divisions between both types of tasks are not clearly defined, teachers feel uncertain about their duties and responsibilities and the extent of their autonomy, and as a result often perceive middle managers as unpredictable. Almost all middle managers in publicly funded schools are professional managers. Teachers in general appreciate middle managers who are willing to discuss educational matters whilst at the same time they are very critical about middle managers who are incapable of organising and managing well.

Privately funded schools characteristically have a more traditional command structure in which management and educational tasks are strictly separated. This division of tasks and the formalisation of tasks and duties give teachers a precise overview of the tasks they are expected to fulfil. Furthermore, teachers are offered professional autonomy to follow their own convictions and preferences. Another

Table 3. Results.

	Publicly funded	Privately funded
Type of middle managers	86% professional managers	54% professional managers
A strict division between educational and non-educational tasks	No strict division	A strict, clear division
Non-educational tasks	Teachers perform a large number of non-educational tasks	Teachers hardly perform any non-educational tasks
Teachers' professional space	Teachers welcome professional judgments	Middle managers do not intervene in professional educational matters
Contact between middle managers and teachers	A lack of perceived mutual interdependency and courtesy	A perception of mutual interdependency and courtesy

characteristic is the small extent to which teachers in privately funded schools are invited to participate in decision-making processes, thereby confirming the strict division between management and educational tasks.

### Conclusions and discussion

First, this article states that the teaching profession in the Netherlands has never manifested the features of the classic model of professionalism, since teachers' autonomy has been subjected to government control since the eighteenth century. From this perspective it is hardly surprising that the reforms that stimulated school autonomy also intensified the link between organisational development and the teaching profession, which is a key feature of the ideal of the so-called New Professionalism. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that organisational control has been considered a threat or barrier to professionalism from the perspective of the ideal of pure or classic professionalism. Second, it is noteworthy to mention the tendency of school managers to professionalise themselves. The professional organisations for educational managers and governors are flourishing, and they seem to be more dynamic and are functioning better than teachers' equivalents.

In school organisation theory, power and influence in schools have often been interpreted in relation to the tensions between organisational control and professional control. This approach focuses on the tension and negotiation between the school management (school leaders, principals, heads, middle managers) representing bureaucracy and teachers representing professionalism.

This article discusses whether school managers really represent bureaucracy. It states that managers in education are often 'professional managers', meaning that they have not been trained as managers but are qualified as professionals to teach. This implies that these managers, as former colleagues of their subordinates (teachers), represent bureaucracy as well as professionalism. The main point here is that many potential conflicts in schools cannot be positioned between bureaucracy and professionalism but between *competing professional judgements*, which Freidson calls corporatisation. Given these notions we argue that studying the interplay between teachers and managers today requires an analytical framework, which takes competing professional judgements into consideration.

The data show that corporatisation – tension between professionals who differ in task and rank – occurs mainly in publicly funded schools. This tension seems to be caused by a lack of clarity and by uncertainty about teachers' and managers' responsibilities and duties. Furthermore, it appears to be vital that teachers are offered professional autonomy to fulfil their educational duties without management dominance. This does not mean that middle managers are expected only to fulfil their managerial and bureaucratic duties, since teachers do appreciate discussing educational matters with their manager. Moreover, teachers need to be invited to take part in the decision-making processes involving educational issues.

The conclusions and recommendations already mentioned do not apply to the privately funded schools, since the profile of New Professionalism cannot be found in the organisational structure and daily practice of privately funded schools. These schools have a structure in which a strict division of tasks and responsibilities between middle managers and teachers exists. Consequently, teachers and middle managers are not accustomed to working in each other's domain, as is often the case in publicly funded schools.

Despite the differences between privately and publicly funded schools, a conclusion can be formulated that is applicable to both types of schools: teachers tend to be more positive about the school and its climate if middle managers take into account the logic of the educational learning processes when performing their management tasks. School managers are thus asked to identify with teachers. In this sense, a harmonious version of competing professional values caused by corporatisation would be welcomed by teachers.

## Notes

1. Since 1996 publicly and privately funded schools in the Dutch VET sector have been subject to the same legal requirements.
2. We do realise that the number of teachers and middle managers representing publicly and privately funded schools is unbalanced. These differences in group sizes and variances have been taken into account in the analyses. For a more detailed description see Honingh (2008) and Honingh and Oort (2009).

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