

Preface

In 1964, Robert Blauner wrote '*Alienation and Freedom*'. One of the dimensions of alienation he distinguishes is 'meaninglessness'. You can feel meaningless when you do not experience a sense of purpose in your work. According to Blauner, work is more meaningful when you: (1) work on a unique and individual product; (2) work on a larger part of the product; and (3) are responsible for a larger part of the production process. Viewed in this light, writing a book is very meaningful. You work on a unique product. You are responsible for a large part of the production process and the resulting product. In this sense, I can recommend writing a book to you all as very meaningful. You should do it!

On the other hand, I did often question the meaning of writing a book. This journey of writing a book concerning policy alienation started when I became a PhD student at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I wondered what the value of writing such a book is for society. How many people would really benefit from my work? Is something meaningful when it does not have any impact on scholarly thinking or tackle important practical problems that professionals, managers and policymakers have to deal with? Some writers are satisfied when their books are not taken into account. However, I wanted my work to enter the professional literature, and took steps to ensure that this would happen.

The first measure that I took was rewriting my thesis as a book for a more international audience. You are reading the result of this effort (and I hope you enjoy it!). This book focuses on the problems that public professionals experience with the policies they have to implement. Today, professionals from all over the world can have problems with implementing policies. This ranges from Israeli teachers organizing a strike (lasting 64 days!) against school reforms (Berkovich, 2011), via British local civil servants leaving their jobs because of their problems with New Public Management reforms focused on efficiency and stringent spending limits (Conley, 2002), to US health care professionals having difficulty with the constant flow of policy changes in primary care, resulting in tension, conflict and burnout (Nutting et al., 2011). In this book, these problems are described using the new concept of 'policy alienation', defined as a general cognitive state of psychological disconnection from a policy that

is implemented by a professional who interacts directly with clients on a regular basis. The concept of alienation is also discussed from a wider perspective. I use examples that are very diverse, such as the painting 'The Old Guitarist' by Pablo Picasso to illustrate the use of alienation by Hegel, the manufacture of iPhones to illustrate the use of the term alienation by Marx, and the problems of police officers who are obliged to reach ticket quotas to illustrate policy alienation. In these ways, I hope to have developed a book that proves valuable for scholars and practitioners all over the world.

A second measure is that I have prepared a short reading guideline, specified for different types of people. This comes next: you can decide which type of person you identify with the most, read the suggested chapters, and maybe be inspired to read more.

For me, my work will become more meaningful as more people take it into account. But alongside this, the most meaningful experience during the writing of this book has been working with scholars, practitioners, clients and others on the interesting subject of policy alienation. Even when writing a book as a single author, I think you 'never write alone'. I am greatly indebted to many people and I would like to mention a few in particular.

Victor Bekkers, Bram Steijn and Sandra van Thiel deserve the first thanks. Victor, your expertise concerning policy processes helped me to develop into a more senior academic in this field. I am glad that we still work together intensively, now maybe more than ever as we coordinate the EU FP7 project on Learning on Innovation in Public Sector Environments (LIPSE). Bram, your knowledge of organizational sociology, and in particular alienation, was invaluable for this book. I admire the fact that you apply your own HRM expertise when working with others. Among else, you reminded me of the dangers of excessive work (*de menselijke maat*). Sandra, I am glad that I got to know you well. Your desire for solid research and quantitative measurement seriously improved this book and helped me to grow as a researcher. Thank you for always being accessible and being involved, both professionally and personally. I wish you all the best in your new role as professor of public management at the Radboud University.

A warm word of thanks also goes to the practitioners who provided me with the much-needed expertise concerning the policies and sectors that I studied. I would like to thank all the respondents I interviewed, those who participated in group discussions or presentations, and those who completed surveys. This totals over 2500 public professionals, including insurance physicians, secondary school teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists and midwives. Without you, this book would not

Table P.1 Reading outline

Who are you?	What can you read when you are in a hurry?
I am a public manager, policy maker or professional, who has to deal with new governmental policies all the time.	Chapter 1 (Introduction), 8 (conclusion, including guidelines for practice), and Appendix (especially designed for practitioners).
I am a sociologist interested in alienation.	Chapter 1 (Introduction), 2 (background on alienation) and 3 (relationship between the public sector and alienation).
I am interested in change management.	Chapters 6 (influence of policy alienation on resistance to change) and 7 (influence of policy alienation, organizational context and personality context on resistance to change).
I am a public administration scholar interested in public management or policy implementation.	Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 8 (Conclusion). Hereafter any chapter is suitable!
I am interested in health care.	Chapters 6 (influence of policy alienation on resistance to change, case: midwives) and 7 (influence of policy alienation, organizational context and personality context on resistance to change. Case: mental health care professionals).
I am interested in social security or education.	Chapter 5 (factors influencing policy alienation Cases: insurance physicians and teachers).
I am interested in psychometric scale development.	Chapter 4 (development of measurement instrument for policy alienation).
I am a very busy consultant.	Appendix (shows how you can use the policy alienation framework in practice).
I cannot identify with one of the above.	Feel free to choose which parts of the book suit you most. Chapter 1 gives a short overview.

exist. I hope I have fully accounted for your experiences with governmental policies.

I would also like to express my thanks to a number of scholars from various universities who were influential in my development as a researcher. Many of them have also provided me with valuable feedback on my thesis, both concerning the content and the methodology. I especially want to thank Stephen Ackroyd, Sandra Groeneveld, Laura

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My last words of thanks go to my wife, Aline. Aline, I think you suffered the most from the fact that I was writing a book and working as a consultant for PwC at the same time. It was a very intense period for both of us. You prevented me from becoming what you called a 'one-dimensional man'. I admire the way you combine work, family, friends, and me (I know I need a lot of your attention). I learn a lot from you and look forward to spending our lives together. You give meaning to my life. Thank you.

Lars Tummers

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