Radboud Repository

Radboud University Nijmegen

PDF hosted at the Radboud Repository of the Radboud University Nijmegen

The following full text is a publisher's version.

For additional information about this publication click this link.
http://hdl.handle.net/2066/71826

Please be advised that this information was generated on 2017-12-06 and may be subject to change.

Forest Managers' Spiritual Concerns

Cathrien de Pater[1]**, Michael Scherer-Rath**[2] **and Frits Mertens**[3]

[1] Centre for the Sustainable Management of Resources, Faculty of Science
cdp@centerforce.nl

[2] Department of Empirical Studies in Religion, Faculty of Religious Studies
M.Scherer-Rath@rs.ru.nl

[3] Titus Brandsma Institute for the Study of Spirituality
Frits.Mertens@titusbrandsmainstituut.nl

Summary
A connection with nature is the core motivational factor that inspires 12 forest managers to carry out their daily work. This has been ascertained through qualitative research into the structure of the emotional perceptions of Dutch forest managers. Three domains or clusters of concepts have been identified: 1) the intra-personal process, 2) the relation between the manager and the management object, and 3) the relation between the manager and the transcendental. The most prominent expressive element arising from all three clusters is 'connectedness'. Positioned in Frijda's motivation-theoretical approach, connectedness in an individual's dispositional constellation can be defined as a so-called 'source concern' (a standard which transcends the everyday situation). Inherent to this concern is a certain sensitivity to external impressions, which can in turn initiate a process of transformation in consciousness or behaviour. As such, connectedness can be an emotional experience in concrete situations and manifest itself as an initiator for change: a change of cognition or world perspective, becoming embedded in the transcendental (self-transcendence), or a personal obligation to bring this connectedness about in everyday practice. In addition, connectedness as a concern represents a goal, an ultimately desired situation, which emerges in the second domain, where quality and ethical value form the two targets (for forest management). In reality these source concerns are insatiable. Nevertheless, managers want to make a contribution to their realisation. They find their motivation in the third domain, 'Immanent-Transcendent Reverence', where we observe the source concern of connectedness embedded in forms of transcendence focused on an immanent and/or transcendental entity ('nature', 'the cosmos', 'creation'). Connectedness with an ultimate source creates an 'ultimate concern' and as such, it is the central line of motivation that prompts people to manage forests. Personal and professional actions are embedded in this larger whole, which transcends the individual.

Introduction

Spiritual values of forest and nature have become an increasingly frequent subject of discussion over the past few years. In international forums and treaties 'cultural and spiritual values' are increasingly mentioned in the argumentation in favour of preservation and sustainable management of forests, nature and biodiversity. Religious and other non-governmental organizations have urged this in various ways. Policymakers require knowledge and models of value in order to fulfil their new role as facilitator of the implementation of policy and the dialogue with social partners.[1] Research also increasingly tackles the question of how to translate these 'cultural and spiritual values' into the real practice of policy and implementation.

Research into these values[2] is carried out in various fields. Outside Europe this research mainly takes place within the framework of the discussion about the preservation of biodiversity, sustainable forest management and 'forest-dwelling and forest-dependent populations' (Posey, 1999). In Canada and elsewhere, research is conducted into the integration of native spiritual values in forest management (Lewis & Sheppard, 2005). In Europe the query into spiritual values is an underlying component of two discussions: 1) ethics and forest management, and 2) the cultural values of forests. These discussions are largely of an exploratory nature. In the Netherlands the debate about the role and place of nature in society has a long history.[3] This debate increasingly focuses on man (and/or the citizen) and one's own responsibility to nature. The query into spiritual values as a motivating factor also comes into view again. This debate is applied in new social agreements, for instance, the recent *Gedragscode Zorgvuldig Bosbeheer* (Code of Conduct on Careful Forest Management). The research into the content of spiritual experience in forests has rendered few results to date (Schouten, 2005, p. 245). They do indicate, however, that spiritual experience can be a significant motivating factor for management, not only of forest and nature (from Trigt et al., 2003), but also of farming (Mertens & Blommestijn, 2004).

---

[1] In a similar way one can understand the report published by the Dutch government about the double transformation in the relation between religion and society. WRR (Wetenschappelijke raad voor het regeringsbeleid (Council of science for government policy) (2007). *Geloven in het Publeike Domein. Verkenningen van een dubbele transformatie.* Amsterdam. We also refer to the dialogue between the World Bank and faith groups (Institute of Social Studies 12-12-06 The Hague).

[2] The introduction of the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (Taylor et al., 2005) suggests a research agenda.

[3] See de Pater, 2005 for an overview.

Research in the Netherlands into the appreciation of forest and nature generally shows that nature is highly appreciated (see also, amongst others, Buijs & Volker, 1997; Koole & Van den Berg, 2004; de Bakker et al., 2007). The impact of the relation between the appreciation of nature and its practical management is hardly known at all with regards to forestry. It is linked to the relation between religious or spiritual motivations and actions, in this case, managing forests. The relation between 'beliefs', 'basic attitudes', 'intention', 'behaviour' and 'responses' has previously been studied using several social-psychological models, and the general conclusion was that there was no connection or merely a weak link between values and attitudes on the one hand and behaviour on the other. Recent research suggests that this link is stronger under certain circumstances than is generally assumed (Dreezens, 2006).

This article reports on an exploratory study into the relation between the appreciation of nature and its management in the area of forestry. The point of departure for this study is the forest managers themselves, people who have chosen to dedicate their work and lives to the forest. From there a path will be traced back to their deeper motivations. The study is centred on the following question:

What motivates people most to manage forests?

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe experiences of people who (semi) professionally manage forests, in order to obtain more motivation-theoretical insight into the relation between the appreciation of nature and the management of forests.

We will continue with a presentation of the details of this research in three stages. Firstly, the motivation-theoretical framework will be outlined (1). Next, we will report on the empirical research and its results (2). Thirdly, we will reflect on these results from a motivation-theoretical perspective (3).

1. Spiritual Concerns from a Motivation-Theoretical Framework

If we want to know what motivates women and men to occupy themselves professionally as forest managers, it seems worthwhile to ask forest managers about the experiences they obtain from their work and the meaning they attribute to them. Mertens and Blommenstijn (2004) did likewise in their research into the spiritual, or 'deeper' motivations. They wanted to know why farmers, despite all the problems in agriculture, continue farming. The answer was found in four motivating factors: 1) the challenge to produce a good product (which touches the farmer's identity); 2) the responsibility for the

other; 3) experiencing the work as a calling, a total way of life in solidarity with nature and life; 4) the feeling that this way of life is part of a larger (transcendental) whole. Together these four factors make up one whole, an identity that helps farmers remain upright amidst current social tensions.

In our research we are looking for motivation sources for the management of forests. This is also the reason we have chosen a qualitative approach. There is hardly any research available on this. What makes people choose a profession that is profoundly connected to nature? As mentioned earlier, the actual experience of the forest managers serves as a starting point. Following Dewey (1995), we consider experience as the interaction between the organism gaining the experience and the living environment. These experiences are acquired as a result of the perception of situations, events, meaningful objects, meaningful goals and meaningful voids or absentees (Frijda, 1993, p. 208). These situations and events act as a stimulus, which, depending on the perception and the meaning attributed to it, evoke a response. How does this come about and what are the underlying dispositions and intentions? In order to discuss this relation in more detail in light of the purpose of this study, we have selected an emotion-theoretical approach for our question. Together with the philosopher Nussbaum (2001, p. 31-35) we assume that emotions imply value judgements, which show whether people consider certain objects, situations and events important for the well being of their own everyday life. According to Nussbaum, this means that emotions are in fact an acknowledgement of need and dependence. They point to something one finds precious and which one subsequently aims for or wants to preserve. Even psychology supports the relation outlined just now between emotion and appreciation or choice to act, by looking upon the emotion as a complex interaction phenomenon of subjective and objective factors (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). Based on research into the origin of existing emotions, most psychologists agree that the conscious or subconscious perception of a situation or event that is meaningful for a significant personal goal forms the starting point of emotions. The emotion is experienced in a positive way when the perceived situation or event supports the personal goal. The emotion is experienced negatively when it interferes with the goal. Frijda (1993, p. 209) clearly explains that an experience is emotional, based on what the situation means to the subject (observer) and its specific appeal. Characteristic of emotions are the readiness to act and prompting strategies to act (Oatley & Jenkins 1996, p. 96).

The fact that something is experienced as emotionally meaningful relates to its appreciation or the effect of the underlying value(s). Consequently, it is fair to assume that this appreciation will also be expressed in the planning and the implementation of daily actions. Frijda (1993, pp. 348-374) groups a number

of dispositional sources of emotion under the phrase 'concerns'. According to him, concern is a motivational concept related to the dispositions that can motivate a person to doing or abandoning something. Needs, motivations, plans and goals have the same motivational function as concerns. Frijda distinguishes between source concerns and surface concerns. Source concerns imply conditions to satisfy, which are related to a person's situation: safety, competence, keeping an overview, etc. Surface concerns have been defined based on specific objects and goals. They are often realisations of source concerns or partial targets to satisfy source concerns.

For some time, personality psychologist Emmons (2003) has been involved in research into the human process of choices in everyday life. Emmons calls Frijda's 'concerns' personal strivings. "Strivings serve as motivational organizing principles that lend coherence and continuity to day-to-day goal pursuits" (Emmons 2003, p. 27). Personal strivings or concerns can "be the reason to act, to search or to avoid and be the reason for emotion when they are satisfied, confirmed or frustrated" (Frijda 1993:349). If certain strivings or concerns are central to a person's life, they occupy an exceptional position compared to other concerns. They are described as ultimate concerns. According to Emmons (2000, p. 4), spirituality is the personal expression of an ultimate concern. According to Joas (1997) and a number of authors studied by Terhaar (2005, p. 149), 'ultimate concerns' are immanently present in life. They do not necessarily have to be sought beyond this world, but can be reached by means of experiences of transcendence within the scope of this world. Spiritual targets imply those personal concerns which are focused on something that is of immanent or transcendental ultimate concern (Emmons, 2000).

2. Empirical Research into Motives of Forest Managers

To explore and describe the experiences and appreciations of forest managers, we have selected a qualitative design, which we will explain in more detail later on. We will start with a brief sketch of the set-up and research method (2.1) and subsequently present the major results (2.2).

2.1. *Set-up and Research Method*

In the Netherlands forest managers[4] make up a small yet diverse group (Schulting, 2000). This is due to the heterogeneous structure of Dutch forest

---

[4] 'Forest managers' is also a phrase used for referring to 'conservation managers', since both jobs — despite some differences — usually coincide in the Netherlands.

ownership: roughly two-thirds of the forest area belongs to the government or large nature organizations, such as '*Natuurmonumenten*' (Society for preservation of natural monuments in the Netherlands) and the '*Provinciale landschappen*' (Union of provincial nature conservation societies) and is managed by professional forest managers; the remaining one-third is private property. There are approximately 1260 private owners, some of whom manage their own forest, whereas another group subcontracts the management to professionals. The managers considered eligible for the selection were those who at least make their own decisions about management measures in the forest, on their own private estate or on that of others. This means they are responsible for tree marking, decide on which species will be planted, etc. Conversations with experts and key figures in Dutch forestry have indicated that forest managers are a heterogeneous though not very large group. Schulting (1999) divides them into the following four groups:

A. Managers who manage a forest for others:
    1. Public forest managers;
    2. Company forest managers;
B. Managers who manage their own forest or estate:
    3. 'Family managers';
    4. 'Leisure managers'.

Private forest owners were the most obvious target group, but restricting the research to this group had its drawbacks: this group had been approached for interviews and research so often, that their main organised lobby, the '*Unie van Bosgroepen Nederland*' (Union of Forest Groups in the Netherlands), had basically stopped making their lists available for random sample surveys. Moreover, it would unintentionally exclude the public and company forest managers, while many of them are in practise also at liberty to intervene in the forest for which they are responsible. As the kind of interview required full voluntary cooperation and as this qualitative aspect was considered more important than statistical representativeness, the direct appeal was chosen:

• A verbal appeal was made during a network evening of the *Vereniging Tropische Bossen* (Society for Tropical Forests — VTB) and the *Koninklijke Nederlandse Bosbouw Vereniging* (the Royal Dutch Forestry Society — KNBV) about forests, ethics and underlying values on 23 March 2005[5] (7 respondents).

---

[5] http://www.tropischebossen.nl/netwerk/20050323.asp; www.knbv.nl; both collected on 18-12-06.

• A written appeal was published in the *Vakblad Natuur Bos Landschap* (Journal for Nature, Forest, Landscape) for managers to participate in the research; in addition, the appeal was spread by word of mouth (5 respondents).

Finally, 12 managers — nine men, one woman and two couples — were interviewed from April through August 2005. Half of them are private owners who manage their own forest. They can be described as semi-professionals. The other half comprises professional forest managers who either work for the government or for a large nature organization.

The research itself is of an exploratory-descriptive nature, which stands to reason considering there is no adequate theory about the motivation sources of forest managers to date. A qualitative-empirical research set-up was chosen, according to the grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss (Strauss & Corbin 1998:9-14, Wester & Peters, 2004:40 et seq). We selected this approach because we wanted to study the 'insiders' perspective' in particular, and analyse it to collect characteristics of their motivation sources. Based on the observations and experiences of the forest managers it would be possible to make a contribution towards developing a motivation-theoretical approach of managing forests.

The research was conducted in two stages: during the first stage, two open interviews were held to acquire more insight into the subject of research from the perspective of forest managers. Then interviews were held with 12 forest managers in the Netherlands. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and a half to two hours. The interview was usually held while walking through the management territory, which helped the interviewees concentrate on the subject. At times, technical matters would distract the attention too much. Then the interview was continued 'at the kitchen table' where the required depth was obtained.

During the interview, the interviewee was invited to discuss his or her decision-making process by means of open questions from a 'topic list'. These questions were merely intended to 'trigger', to have the person take a closer look at his or her motives. The first questions were aimed at the life story, which is usually a good start for an interview. Next there were questions about experiences, then about meanings followed by questions about ever-deeper values. The interviewee determined which aspects of the inspiration process received attention. The topic list has been included in Appendix 1. The interviews were thus the 'raw material' from which the motivation sources could be identified.

The interviews were recorded digitally, transcribed and then analysed by means of the computer program Kwalitan 5.0.9. The process consists of four phases.

The analysis starts with an *exploration phase*, which focuses on the 'open coding' of the interview material (Wester & Peters, 2004, pp. 153-155; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 101-121). The rough presentation of a question and the purpose of the research are the starting point of the analysis. Characteristic to all phases is a cyclic process. The observation is followed by the analysis of the observations, which is followed by the reflection. The process then returns to the observation again, based on the presentation of a question and purpose. After the interviews have been transcribed, an initial ordering of the material can take place. Questions that should be asked at this point are: What do you want to know? Why do you want to know? From which perspective do you conduct your research? During the first reading of the conversations, 270 key words or codes were allocated to the segments of the texts.

The next phase is the *specification phase,* which is about ordering and reducing codes (axial coding) (Wester & Peters, 2004, pp. 160-169; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 123-142). Generally speaking, this takes place by means of new material (new interviews). Due to lack of time it was decided to have a second reading of the same 12 interviews in this exploratory research. Each segment is allocated a characteristic code. Subsequently, the number of codes is reduced by rephrasing them. In this study we reduced the number to 230. In the specification phase an attempt is made to discover dimensions in the characteristics, based on an overview of the characteristics of all codes. They help in finding correlations between the codes based on, and continually returning to, the original fragments from the texts. In this way logical structures are created that describe the synthesized argumentations *of the managers themselves*.

In the *reduction phase* the relations between the key concepts are finally determined. To this end the material is once again selected to carry out selective coding aimed at indicating patterns and connections between the central concepts or codes. During this phase, the essence of the theory that is to be developed is determined.

In this article we shall discuss the second and third phase in more detail. This article will not discuss the *integration phase,* which focuses on the detailing and testing of this theory (in response to the research question) on the basis of new research material. We will, however, offer suggestions for further research.

2.2. *Results*

After the two exploratory interviews had been held, they were transcribed and analysed, focussing on the research question and the objective expressed in the

introduction. The analysis of these interviews indicated that the forest managers actually felt connected in different ways with the reality that presents itself outside of them. They experience this external reality as a motivation for their professional practice. Examples of this are the connection with nature, a sense of unity with nature, people and animals. Based on these first stages of analysis, it was decided to further articulate the research question.

What are the goals of the forest managers?
As mentioned before, a topic list was developed for the other interviews to guarantee that the same topics would be discussed in all interviews. It was not our intention to guide the interviews with detailed questions. The topic list was only intended as a prompt. We not only wanted to explore the factual context, but also people's motives for wanting to be a (semi) professional forest manager. In addition, we also wished to investigate the meaning or the appreciation of the personal professional actions in order to detect the ultimate values behind the actions. Consequently, we decided to immediately ask for the most profound values in case they did not come up in conversation.

   The result of the exploration phase — the open coding of the interview texts — was a list of 270 codes: concepts that expressed significant aspects of the perception and values. The specification phase resulted in a reduction to 230 codes and a subdivision of these codes in three clusters of related concepts: three 'domains'. These domains contained different aspects of experiences and goals. They were ultimately named as follows:

   1. 'Connectedness'
   2. 'Biocentric Responsibility'
   3. 'Immanent-transcendental Reverence'

Below we will briefly characterize these domains and enter into the various aspects of experiences and goals.

Domain 1, 'Connectedness':
The domain of 'Connectedness' indicates how the managers experience the process of managing forests. It is characterized by various aspects of involvement. These aspects describe an intra-personal process, whereby the person's deep connection with nature is at the centre. Within this intra-personal process we identify a number of aspects that cannot be separated from one another in the stories of the interviewees. Analytically, these aspects can nevertheless be distinguished. Connectedness occurs in the stories of the twelve forest managers in different ways. For the sake of analytical clarity, we have attempted to

distinguish the process of experience of managing forests as clearly as possible from more action-related aspects (which will be discussed in domain two). The experience of connectedness is important to all twelve forest managers and can be distinguished according to five aspects: evolutionary, holistic, aesthetic, religious and ethical. These aspects cannot be traced back to all twelve forest managers in the same way. Nevertheless, these aspects clearly structure the contents of the interviews. We will describe the aspects of connectedness in more detail and provide them with an empirical foundation.

Evolutionary

Several forest managers stress the evolutionary character of nature and the ever-developing relationship between man and nature. According to some of them, nature has no goal. Everything comes into being on the basis of coincidence and the instinct to survive. Most managers perceive and acknowledge this survival instinct as the moving force in nature with which they feel connected.

Holistic

Another aspect that is directly connected with the evolutionary character is the connectedness to and feeling at one with nature: the holistic aspect. By 'feeling part of nature', as the forest managers say, an increasingly stronger bond with nature is created. Initially, the perception of visual beauty plays an important role. Later on, one connects more with 'the essence of one's humanity', with nature and the larger whole. This is intensified by experiencing the seasons, the natural cycle of life and death, which makes one gradually discover the divine in nature (10.59).[6] *"And at the same time you are somewhere, very much aware that you are part of a larger whole"* (6.44).

Aesthetic

The perception of beauty is a key factor that is mentioned regularly in the interviews. A number of managers describe how certain perceptions of beauty in nature made them realise that one way or another nature transcends everyday. Art sometimes plays a role. Some respondents use the term 'aesthetics': "*aesthetics is beauty linked with religion*" (10.66). They also connect aesthetics to ethics: *"By receiving the beauty of something you behold, you can feel a better person"* (10.66). You feel *"awe, smallness, humility, (..) relief"* (10.66). By perceiving natural phenomena — seasons, individual species and landscapes — people experience beauty. In this respect seasons are mentioned as well: the return of spring, for instance, yet also the beauty of winter. Besides *"The more*

---

[6] The bracketed numbers refer to the original interview texts (documents and segments).

I grow older, the more I notice (. . .) that the way in which the seasons link up with one another, touches the sense of: you are on the way. And because you can see that, experience that, I consider it a kind of enrichment of my existence" (10.6).

In a different way managers describe how they "are touched" by particular experiences or feelings. They use expressions such as "impressive" or "fascinating". Peace and quiet, special places, impressive landscapes can cause them to "be touched". It is an existential experience, when the connection with the larger whole and the sense of life fully come into view for a while. *"It is rather a feeling of being completely overwhelmed, indeed, when you drive on to the moors or when you get out of your car and walk for a while, and then you can see that mist hanging in the gorge. And then the sun comes up like that, right, and then you appreciate your job a lot, you know, that's kind of why you do it"* (2.7).

The aesthetic experience of connectedness includes a therapeutic function. For a number of managers nature is a healing factor for the inevitable deficiencies and losses in life. Nature provides healing in two ways: by means of comfort and through insight.

Comfort in nature: The experience of the beauty of nature is an important factor when dealing with loss:

> *At a certain moment I came to a tree. And then I actually realized: truly, (..) I have admired you, because you were so beautiful. And nothing has changed that, but now I do not really notice you. (. . .). Then I realized that when I looked around, nothing had actually changed. However, something had changed within me. (..) This again made me open up later on and look around beyond myself. (..) And then again the awareness that creation is so beautiful* (12.74).

Managers are also satisfied to see that others find comfort in their territory.

Insight: By experiencing the beauty of nature and as a result of the process of contemplation and personal development described above, someone can gain insight into his or her personal problems. This can have a healing effect according to some managers. One manager consciously uses the 'tree metaphor' to bring people, especially children, "back to themselves" (10.42). He does so by observing them at a certain level of consciousness and by seeing them as if they were trees.

Religious
What has emerged in connection with the holistic and aesthetic aspect should also be discussed separately: the religious aspect. To some, the management of and connectedness with nature is a way of feeling connected with higher things, the source, the cosmos or the like, and thus with the meaning of life.

The question about the meaning of life is very much cherished by some, for instance when:

> *I think that this time of all times is particularly important to become aware of what it is all about. Look, you are born with nothing and you leave with nothing. So what is the significance of what happens in the middle? Are we merely occupied with providing for our safety, accumulating material things and judging others, especially dominating and controlling others? Or perhaps we should look upon ourselves as a tiny link in a gigantic system where we all have a kind of moral obligation to support everything that lives and breathes?* (4.62)

One or two interviewees experience the connection between nature and the 'source' directly: by experiencing the landscape — first visually, later on by means of 'the essence of yourself' — you start to feel the 'divine in nature'. Someone else describes that connection as a kind of reconciliation:

> *But I think that truly if that feeling, together with what you are doing as a human being, if that is the source it springs from, yes, then I simply think that it is all right the way it is. Surely, everyone makes mistakes and I make a huge amount of mistakes! If the source is love, however, then I think that the great Creator, whoever that may be, will not make you pay for that. (12.75).*

Others describe more intermediate steps, or arrive at that connection with their source in different ways. There is only one manager who claims to experience the divine in nature directly.

Ethical

Apart from the aspects that describe the receptivity of the experience and the perception of the connectedness with nature, there are also dimensions of connectedness that include a response to it, the aspect of acting. The experience of connectedness is an experience of the "unity" of "body, soul and spirit". This unity can be experienced as a profound feeling through which the higher goal in life manifests itself and the meaning of life becomes clear. At that point it reminds one of "what it is all about". One or two respondents make a direct connection between knowing and acting and also bring up its opposite, rampant ignorance. Turning this ignorance around requires awareness raising and motivation (4.2). Others do not see the relation as straightforward, although they acknowledge the significance of ethical awareness in order to do the right thing:

> *And when I saw down those small trees, it is more like: I saw them down, I do not look up all the time, yet still, still, something happens to me. When I am doing my job (..), for instance, and I have to walk through a small forest, I say: well, this and that has to be done, yes, you walk around with certain ideas. You think: do I have to [saw*

it down] or yes, I do . . . you do choose something that is alive and in bloom and, then I think yes, if I say 'that one', that one goes and the other one stays. Yes, that is on your mind sometimes. (5.52).

All in all the emotional experience of nature can be seen as an awakening of the connectedness. Managers report to be touched by special experiences of nature: meeting an animal, the Himalayas, the silence, or a special spot. It is the ineffable moment when the observation and the emotion meet. The term 'impressive' or 'fascinating' is often used. Some managers would like to convey this consciousness of nature to others (yet hesitate to 'force it on others' too much).

Domain 2, 'Biocentric Responsibility':
The domain that is indicated by this phrase concerns the whole complex of relations between the manager and the object of management: everything that determines his or her attitude towards the object and informs and inspires him to good management. The name 'Biocentric Responsibility' has been adopted from Macqueen (2005:319 et seq), who describes a similar principle, which, in essence is found in all world religions. Our former code was 'Stewardship', but Macqueen's phrase comprises a more adequate description of the phenomenon. Most managers do feel responsible for nature, but do not feel assigned by a creator. The latter is included in the current environmental philosophical explanation of 'Stewardship'. To quote a respondent:

I do not want to make any concessions [in my job] to 'do it the easy way', no, I think this *is my responsibility and I stand by it. It is not always easy or fun, but it is my drive in life* (10.15).

Within the domain of 'Biocentric Responsibility' we can distinguish three aspects: 'Ethics', 'Quality' and 'Financial return'. The first one indicates the why. What motivates managers to become passionate about managing nature responsibly; the second one, quality, describes what this 'responsible management' actually means, in other words the content aspects; the latter indicates a vital precondition for the other two aspects, mentioned by almost all managers.

As mentioned above, the aspect of 'ethics' indicates the more profound motivations as to *why* managers aim at good management. What is good and what view of nature determines the choices that are made? The views that emerge during the interviews — particularly in examples from the working practice — are not univocal. The managers differ in their assessments regarding whether

or not exotic trees should be removed, whether one should intervene with suffering animals, etc. The grounds on which that assessment is based, however, are not difficult to group. These groups form the following subdivisions: 'respect' (elements: respect for nature and for people, the awareness that nature is superior to man, the perception of beauty, and responsibility), 'conservation' (the 'drive' to secure forest and landscape for the future), 'intervention' (ethical questions about management interventions), and 'conflict' (protection of vulnerable nature against threats). Quotes:

> *I find it difficult to understand people who, starting from that aesthetic sense and that beauty and that sense of spirituality which you receive in return, do not stop to think about their own ethical actions* (10.67).
> *There is always a sense of: that tree is alive, too, yes, and you have to handle it carefully* (15.27).
> *When I see these things, such a terrific old tree, I realize that it has been there some two or three centuries already. And how long have I been running about this place, three and half years, and how much longer will I be running about? God knows! So what are we to say about its existence? I mean I am just passing by, literally* (9.34).

The aspect of 'quality' describes what managers mean by (qualitatively) 'good' work or 'good' management. They chiefly express themselves in terms of technical-physical management, raising the subject of results and their own competence. However, the underlying motives were closely connected with this and difficult to separate during the interview. When the questions continued, an abundance of motives was mentioned, which can be divided in the following sub-aspects: 'professional ethos' (courage, love, management know-how, professional responsibility, professional choice), 'choices between reason and feeling' (a combination of know-how, ideal, forest and forest management, and intuition), aesthetics (peace and quiet, the perception of beauty of both landscapes and trees, occasional energetic experiences) and 'regional characteristics'. Quotes:

> *When you know and realize you will have to mow wet dune valleys in order to preserve parnassia,[7] and that if you don't, it will overgrow, this is plain knowledge. So you manage on the basis of your responsibility* (7.54).
> *If something is not going right, I think: Guys, I am not the only one who sees it, (..) And the others are inclined not to stick out above the crowd. Finally I cannot help doing it anyway, because I consider myself a coward [if I don't]* (12.80).

---

[7] *Parnassia palustris* L., a Red List (protected) species.

Financial return: Without being asked, nearly all managers refer to the financial aspect of their business. The forest business does not exactly make a fortune, and in some cases they have difficulty staying out of the red. In one or two cases they even have to make up the deficit. Financial return is not an exclusive target for any of the managers; when a surplus presents itself, they often use it to help achieve other environmental goals. Nevertheless, almost everyone regards financial health as a precondition for realizing other targets. It defines the limit of the space to manoeuvre. This limit becomes stricter, though, especially regarding landscape management. Farming — which used to contribute significant earnings to estates — is less and less profitable, the 'competitive society' advances and one should learn to become an 'entrepreneur', which means seeking chances in new lines of business and staying alert to survive. All this presents a challenge to honouring the ideal of 'good management', i.e. 'Biocentric Responsibility'.

Domain 3, 'Immanent-transcendental Reverence':[8]
It has already been discussed in Domains 1 and 2, though not mentioned explicitly: the immanent-transcendental reverence to which the forest managers often refer. The manager claims to feel something between him/herself and the ultimate, the source, God (once or twice), or suchlike. In other words: the transcendental. Various concepts are applied, which are sometimes mentioned in one and the same breath: the earth, or mother earth, all earthly things and the cosmos. Only one or two managers link themselves directly with the cosmos, while most of them have something specific to say about the earth. Dealing with nature can help them to get into contact with the earth and thus with the ultimate source.

Various managers mention 'the source', 'the ultimate' or 'the divine consciousness' as the ultimate reality. That source is usually not further definable, but it is the ultimate goal with which they want to be connected. It is striking that they consider that source to be in the cosmos (the 'whole entirety'), yet at the same time nearby, in the earth, in 'everything', even in themselves. In other words: the source has a transcendental as well as an immanent dimension. The interviewees specify the immanent dimension in particular, coded here as 'earth'. This is not surprising, considering the fact that they work with nature. Even the cosmos is no distant transcendence: *"Earth and cosmos work together"*, says one manager. The connection with the transcendental is dynamic: Working with nature brings about a connection with the earth and the cosmos, and

---

[8] This term is inspired by MacQueen's term 'Spiritual Reverence' (2005).

consequently, with the higher and ultimate. 'Earth' and 'cosmos' are therefore correlated. Not everyone has expressed this link so clearly but all interviewees at least see that nature is embedded in a wider reality, and that it is important to be connected with that reality. Quotes:

> *The source is in everything.*
> *To me heaven is something most divine. Still, heaven is not outside myself, but also within myself.*

Only two managers clearly contrast the cosmos with the earth as the higher reality. Special experiences of nature can contain moments when one feels connected with the cosmos, when everything is timeless and at one. The connection can also be created by "doing nothing" in the Taoist sense, or by gaining inspiration from indigenous spiritual traditions. However, the search for the cosmic does not mean 'rising to higher levels' for these managers either; they remain firmly on the ground. Quote:

> *I think it is important to realize that you can feel a connection with the divine outside, the origin, the primordial principle, whatever you want to call it, the idea (..) Feeling connected with it and participating in it is not lifting yourself up; I would rather say: it is placing yourself next to humanity or coming down a step instead of raising yourself.*

Managers mention a number of concepts that have been labelled 'earth', to indicate the larger system on which they focus their care: "earth", "earth systems", our "planet", "mother earth", yet also, more concrete, "ground". Here, too we can find a continuum ranging from the concrete 'down-to-earth' level to higher levels. This dimension is made up of the following sub-dimensions: 'sustainability' (a complex of 'knowing and acting', a strong focus on the future and a strong awareness of the long-term impact of decisions), 'sacred place' and 'world development'. The first sub-dimension is by far mentioned the most often. Quote:

> *We position ourselves as an identity on earth in the world (…) So you simply have to act in an earthly manner, you need it as a means to stay alive, to preserve yourself and at the same time this grasping for the essential is extremely important.*

As for the latter: almost all managers link their own work to the greater social and political trends in the world: the deterioration of the environment: tropical forests and landscapes, and social problems. It arouses feelings of pessimism and powerlessness, but it also makes them realize that, no matter how

small and insignificant, they provide a counterforce in the work they do. In this way, they recognize a connection with and a motivation for their personal actions (ethics). A quote from a manager who grows his own firewood:

> *When you look ahead like this, we come across problems everywhere, worldwide and here as well, energy supply, which makes me think, why don't you think of central heating with firewood or burning wood chips in power stations. I really see a future there, in realizing landscape management by means of this kind of thing.*

Some take a gloomy view of the future, but others cherish the hope that humanity will in time gain sufficient understanding to be able to turn the tide and to reconnect with the 'source', which can be both immanent and transcendent.

3. Discussion of the Results

At the end of this article we will reflect upon the results of the exploration and specification phase in order to find the relations between the core concepts in the reduction phase (3.1).

The result of this analysis phase will allow us to evaluate the research: formulate an answer to the research question and critically look back on the execution of the study (3.2).

3.1 *Reflection on the Research Results*

We have discovered three clusters of concepts in the accounts of the 12 forest managers. They provide information about the motivation to manage forests. The clusters are characterized by the experiences the forest managers have acquired in their day-to-day practice. In the first paragraph we have indicated that, like Frijda (1993, p. 208), we assume theoretically that these experiences are acquired as a result of perceiving situations, events, meaningful objects, meaningful goals and meaningful voids or absentees. These situations and events act as stimuli, which, depending on the observation and the meaning ascribed to it, evoke a response. Finally, the central characteristic of the acquired experiences is the connectedness the forest managers feel with nature, the cosmos, creation. This connectedness is a disposition and an intention that underpin the expression of meaning, and ultimately, the response (the emotional perception in the working practice). According to Frijda (1993, p. 350), dispositions can be regarded as internal representations that serve as standards

by which real situations are tested. Dispositions express an inclination or concern and in this way serve as a criterion for action or a condition for satisfaction. Frijda (1993, p. 353, 360) distinguishes between source concerns and surface concerns. Source concerns are those with conditions for satisfaction, which are aimed at the individual's well being. They are insatiable because they represent standards that can scarcely be reached in everyday situations: they often transcend the actual daily situation. Source concerns can sometimes transform into surface concerns, which motivate daily activities. Surface concerns refer to specific objects and aims representing a differentiation of the focus of source concerns.

In this way Frijda sketches a behavioural model containing possible actions that are linked to certain sensitivities. This means that there is a disposition to recognize opportunities to activate the system. According to this model, forest managers identify real-life situations that allow them to emotionally experience their sensitivity to connectedness. These situations allow the forest managers to consciously experience their connectedness with nature and to express it in a professional action. This behavioural system also contains a set value, which means a disposition to recognize the conditions to end the action (377). In light of this model, connectedness can be defined as a source concern because connectedness functions as a disposition. And based on this disposition forest managers have emotional experiences in certain situations. In this case connectedness is an internal representation corresponding with external events. Connectedness as sensitivity to certain stimuli, including the resulting behavioural potential ('starting provision'), is expressed in the five aspects that we have identified in the first domain of 'connectedness'. An individual can feel connected with nature in an evolutionary process through which both nature and man have to pass. Experiences that express a holistic sense of solidarity also refer to a disposition of connectedness. Aesthetic experiences refer to something larger than the individual having the experience. The stimuli that create this emotional experience are recognized as a challenge for one's personal cognitive or emotional capacity for assimilation. This is a matter of connectedness for the sake of enrichment. The aesthetic sensitivity can also include a therapeutic function, enabling one to look at reality in a different way or from another perspective. The aspect of religious connectedness is an anchoring of the individual in the transcendental through self-transcendence. An orientation to act is expressed in the ethical aspect of connectedness, which is characterized by an obligation to realize this connectedness.

Not only do concerns describe starting provisions, they may also function as a set value indicating when the desired situation has been reached. This too is reflected in the forest managers' statements. In the domain of 'Biocentric

Responsibility', connectedness as a concern is expressed as goals for the quality and the ethical value of forest management. Sustainabilty, reverence and conservation are examples of goals that function as set values, setting standards that can hardly be met by separate individual actions. In reality these source concerns are insatiable. Nevertheless, forest managers want to contribute to their realisation. How can they express their motivation to let connectedness materialize? According to Frijda, concerns are the final destination when the emotions are traced back to their origin. He regards emotions as changes in one's readiness to act.

Connectedness as a source concern can therefore be seen either as a sensitivity or as a set value. The forest managers clearly express these two forms in the first and second domain. In addition, we have also detailed a third domain and we have stated that this domain is implied in the first two domains, but still has its own profile: 'Immanent-transcendental Reverence'. We believe that the anchoring of the source concern or goal is expressed here. This could mean that the concern is not the final destination, but is itself embedded in something which transcends the individual. It is a kind of self-transcendence focused on an immanent and/or transcendental entity. Here the forest managers talk about nature, the cosmos or creation. This is the basis of the source concern of connectedness. Perhaps we can describe the connectedness with the ultimate source as an ultimate source concern, because the anchoring of the sensitivity for connectedness to an ultimate reference transcending the individual, describes the essence of the motivation for managing forests. Forest management means standing up for the forest — vulnerable yet always somewhat unpredictable — and consequently, it means a continuous self-transcendence in aiming at, connecting with or responding to the ultimate.

3.2 *Evaluation*

At the start we formulated the purpose of this study as gathering knowledge and gaining insight into the motivation with which women and men (semi) professionally manage a forest. We looked for the goals which, according to Frijda's emotion theory, affect the acquired experiences and the meanings attached to them.

The interviews we conducted with the 12 forest managers clearly show that their emotional experiences in their work can be traced back to the relevance of their sensitivity to connectedness. Connectedness is the concern that motivates the forest managers and makes them sensitive to situations that facilitate or prevent the materialization of a personal and professional connection with nature in real working situations. The forest managers feel responsible for the

quality of their professional actions because of this connectedness, which clearly emerges from the results of this research. The statements of the forest managers in relation to the 'Biocentric Responsibility' show that their professional decisions are embedded in the profound connectedness with nature, the cosmos or creation. Ethically responsible actions and quality control arise from a deep personal concern for the connectedness with nature, and they are expressed in both emotions and in a certain orientation to act. Personal and professional goals are integrated.

This sensitivity to connectedness is the motivation source for the 12 forest managers. The perception of nature and the day-to-day choices to act, are based on an ultimate source, which is immanent or transcendental, or at times both. This embedding allows the forest managers to transcend the situation they find themselves in. Consequently, the personal and professional decisions to act are not made in a detached way or based on disconnected considerations. These decisions are embedded in a whole that is larger than the individual. They are connected with the specific person, the working environment (nature) and an ultimate source that encompasses this whole.

In response to the research question specified under 2.2, we can formulate the following: the forest managers want to do justice to a connectedness that exists as a whole entirety between man and nature. They encounter this connectedness in their work in the forests every day. They also want to do justice to a connectedness, which they sense emotionally on a daily basis. This feeling of connectedness is the link between their everyday actions and the source from which they obtain the passion to stand up for the connectedness between nature and man.

In the introduction we mentioned the fact that spiritual values receive a lot of attention from the media and scholarly research. Frijda has made an attempt to show that concerns can also express values. According to him, values relate to situations that do not necessarily involve the subject (1993, p. 369). In this respect connectedness can also be comprehended as a value. Is connectedness a spiritual value or concern as well? Bucher (2007, p. 33) says that empirical research into people's spirituality has shown that involvement or connectedness appears to be the very key aspect of spirituality. This connectedness has two axes: a horizontal and a vertical one. The horizontal axis comprises nature and the cosmos, as well as the personal lifeworld (soziale Mitwelt). The vertical axis includes, on the one hand, one's own self and, on the other hand, the connectedness with a higher reality or a transcendent principle. In our research, too, connectedness arose as a central element and we could also recover these two axes, and join Bucher in saying that sensitivity to connectedness characterizes the spirituality of the forest managers. This spirituality is of an imma-

nent and/or transcendent nature. In addition, it is the intra-personal motive that continually transcends itself in order to realize the concern of connectedness. Spirituality could therefore be described as an important motivational source, which for these forest managers influences the perception and the orientation to act.

Unfortunately, we cannot make any more detailed statements on the basis of the collected data and the chosen research design. Future research is required to further elucidate the relation between concerns and spirituality and the integration of personal and professional levels. In particular, it should examine the impact of dispositions on the choices to act in daily work practise.

References

Bakker, H.C.M. de, C.S.A. van Koppen and J. Vader (2007). *Het groene hart van burgers; Het maatschappelijk draagvlak voor natuur en natuurbeleid.* WOT-rapport No. 47. Wageningen: WUR-LEI Unit Wettelijke Onderzoekstaken Natuur & Milieu.

Bucher, A.A. (2007). *Psychologie der Spritualität. Handbuch.* Weinheim: Beltz Verlag.

Buijs, A.E. & C.M. Volker (1997). *Publiek draagvlak voor natuur en natuurbeleid.* Wageningen: Staring Centrum.

Dewey, J. (1995). *Erfahrung und Natur.* Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.

Dreezens, E. (2006). *The missing link: The relationship between values and attitudes.* Ph.D. Thesis University of Maastricht.

Emmons, R.A. (2000). "Is Spirituality an Intelligence? Motivation, Cognition, and the Psychology of Ultimate Concern". *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion,* 10, (1) 3-26.

―――― (2003). *The psychology of ultimate concern. Motivation and Spirituality in Personality.* New York: Guilford.

Frijda, N.H. (1993). *De emoties. Een overzicht van onderzoek en theorie (= transl.: The emotions).* Amsterdam Bert Bakker.

Joas, H. (1997). *Die Entstehung der Werte.* Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp.

Kleinginna, P.R.jr. and A.M. Kleinginna (1981). "A categorized list of emotion definitions with suggestions for a consensual definition". *Motivation and Emotion*, 5, 345-379.

Koole, S.L. & A.E. van den Berg (2004). "Paradise Lost and Reclaimed: An Existential Motives Analysis of Human-Nature Relations". In J. Greenberg, S.L., Koole, T. Pyszczynski (Eds.), *Handbook of experimental existential psychology*. New York: Guilford. New York: Guildford.

Lewis, J.L. and S.R.J. Sheppard (2005). "Ancient Values, New Challenges: Indigenous Spiritual Perceptions of Landscapes and Forest Management". *Society and Natural Resources,* 18, 907-920.

MacQueen, D. (2005). "Reverence and responsibility in forest ethics. Inserting the meaning of life back into the culture of possession". Paper presented at the European Forests in Ethical Discourse Symposium, Berlin, Germany, January, 18-19, 2005. In Erkkilä, A., R.E. Heinonen, G. Oesten, Paavo Pelkonen, and Olli Saastamoinen (eds.), 2005. European Forests and Beyond, an Ethical Discourse. *Silva Carelica*, 49, 315-333. Also visit http://www.iied.org/pubs/pdf/full/13509IIED.pdf collected on 31-10-2006.

Mertens, F. and H. Blommesteijn (2004). *Boer in hart en ziel. Onderzoek naar de diepere drijfveren van mensen in de agrarische sector*. Nijmegen: Titus Bransdma Instituut.

Nussbaum, M. (2001). *Oplevingen van het denken. Over de menselijke emoties. (= transl.: Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions)*. Amsterdam: Ambo.

Oarley, K. and J.M. Jenkins (1996). *Understanding emotions*. Oxford: Blackwell publishers.

Pater, C. de (2005). "Trends in Dutch Research on Worldviews and Values Regarding Forests". In: Erkkilä, A., R.E. Heinonen, Gerhard Oesten, Paavo Pelkonen, and Olli Saastamoinen (eds.) *European Forests and Beyond, an Ethical Discourse. Silva Carelica* Vol. 49: 79-91. Joensuu, Finland: University of Joensuu.

Posey, D.A. (comp. & ed.) (1999). *Cultural and spiritual values of biodiversity*. Nairobi: United Nations Environmental Programme.

Roothaan, A. (2005). *Terugkeer naar de natuur. De betekenis van natuurervaring voor een nieuwe ethiek.* Kampen: Klement.

Schouten, M. (2005). *Spiegel van de natuur. Het natuurbeeld in cultuurhistorisch perspectief*. Utrecht: KNNV/Staatsbosbeheer.

Schulting, R. (2000). "Stijlvol beheren. Onderzoek naar de attitude en beheerstijl van bosbeheerders". *Nederlands Bosbouw Tijdschrift,* 72, 2, 69-73.

Strauss, A. and J. Corbin (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research. Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Taylor, B.R., J. Kaplan, L. Hobgood-Oster, A. Ivakhiv and M. York (eds.) (2005). *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. London: Thoemmes Continuum.

Terhaar, T.L. (2005). *Nature, trauma, and the soul: The mystical experience in nature as a wellspring of spiritual values.* PhD dissertation. Ann Arbor, USA: Proquest. www.il.proquest.com UMI # 3169001.

Trigt, A. van, K. van Koppen and H. Schanz (2003). "Spirituele waarden van natuur; een analyse van spiritualiteit in relatie tot bomen en bos". *Landschap,* 20, (3) 155-163.

Wester, F. and V. Peters (2004). *Kwalitatieve analyse; uitgangspunten en procedures*. Bussum: Coutinho.

Appendix 1

Topic list for semi-structured interviews

N.B. the order of the questions has been determined to allow the interview to proceed smoothly, and has not been based on the systematics of the contents. During the interview the order can be abandoned, depending on the dynamics of the conversation.

Questions about the *factual context*:
- How old are you? Where were you born? What did your father and mother do for a living? How did you end up in forestry?
- How did you end up in this forest? How long have you been managing this territory?
- How large is the forest? What kind of units (forest, heathland, water, etc), tree species, animals, etc make up this territory? How was it managed before? What has changed in the course of time?
- What are the management goals for this territory? Is there a particular vision in the management plan and if so, what is it? Is it an economically viable company? Is that important?
- Which parties are directly involved in the management of the territory? What is their relation to you as a manager?

Questions about *motives*:
- What motivated you to start managing this forest?
- Have your motives changed in the course of time? What was the reason for that?
- Has working with the forest affected this development?

Questions about *meanings*:
- What gives you satisfaction or fulfilment? How does this work 'touch' you?
- What are significant experiences in you management work?
- What are valuable aspects/matters of this work? Why?
- Have these valuable aspects ever led to certain decisions in your forest management?
- What has been lost and should have been preserved? What is still in danger of deteriorating or disappearing?
- What does your work mean to the community or to society? What would it mean to society if the forest or the scenic area were to disappear?

- What does it mean to work profoundly with or in relation to natural forces?
- Do you allow natural forces, or other 'superhuman' forces, to lead you in this work?

Questions about *most profound values*:
- Can you say something about your fundamental orientation of values?
- You mentioned the following considerations: . . . Could you classify them? According to you, what is the 'highest goal' of forest management in the way you practice it? What is your 'ideal' form of forest management?
- Should one be an idealist or be inspired to do this work? Why?

Evaluation
- What did you think of this interview? What do you think went well?
- What could be improved?