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## Bilingualism and economic development in west European minority language regions

Langevelde, Ab van

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*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*

1997

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Langevelde, A. V. (1997). *Bilingualism and economic development in west European minority language regions: a Dooyeweerdian approach*. s.n.

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# **BILINGUALISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WEST EUROPEAN MINORITY LANGUAGE REGIONS: A DOOYEWEERDIAN APPROACH**

Ab van Langevelde  
University of Groningen  
Faculty of Spatial Sciences  
Postbus 800  
9700 AV Groningen  
The Netherlands  
Telephone: 00-31-50-3633885  
Fax: 00-31-50-3633901

SOM theme D: Demography and Geography

**Keywords:** Bilingualism, West European minority language regions, Regional economic development, Structural theory of Dooyeweerd, Theory of the firm, Value surplus.

**JEL Classification:** A12, B41, D21, L21, R58, Z10.

## **Abstract**

In this publication possible influences of bilingualism on the regional economic development in West European minority language areas are analyzed. This analysis is made using the interdisciplinary structural theory of Herman Dooyeweerd, a Dutch philosopher. Part 1 contains a summary of some fundamental concepts of this structural theory which are particularly relevant in this context. In Part 2 a Dooyeweerdian approach to the problem of the relationship between bilingualism and regional economic development is developed step by step. In the beginning, the value of existing microeconomic models of the firm for the analysis of the problem is assessed. Thereafter, a Dooyeweerdian alternative is given by defining a company as a societal structure in which one or more people ought to strive to produce a value surplus. It is argued that value surplus and financial profit are not completely synonymous concepts though they are clearly related. This Dooyeweerdian approach is subsequently applied to the problem mentioned. What is the relative value of a minority language for companies in relevant regions? In the process, questions are formulated for empirical research. A concluding remark is made on the relevance of this Dooyeweerdian analysis for the regional economic policy of government bodies.

Financial support of the Foundation for Economic, Social-cultural, Spatial and Environmental Sciences of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, the Provincial Government of Fryslân, the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen and the *Berie foar it Frysk* (Frisian Language Board) is gratefully acknowledged.

## Preface

At the end of 1996 my article "Bilingualism in the Business World in West European Minority Language Regions: Profit or Loss?" was published in *Philosophia Reformata* (1996/2, pp. 135-59). Since this journal presupposes expert technical knowledge of the philosophy of Herman Dooyeweerd, a Dutch philosopher, this article is in places difficult to grasp for an important group of scholars in the relevant field of research. This is the background of the appearance of the current publication that contains the article in question (see Part 2) and a summary of relevant fundamental concepts of Dooyeweerdian structural theory (see Part 1).

I owe a word of thanks to many persons and institutions for their contribution to the appearance of this publication. Henk Geertsema helped me during several years to get some understanding of the philosophy of Dooyeweerd. Piet Pellenbarg patiently gave me the opportunity to enlarge my knowledge on the subject. Herbert Donald Morton made the authorized translation from Dutch into English of the relevant article (see Part 2) and acted as a touchstone regarding my use of the English language in an earlier version of the summary of Dooyeweerdian terminology (see Part 1). Didy Nauta-Offereins prepared the text for the printing process. The Foundation for Economic, Social-cultural, Spatial and Environmental Sciences (*ESR*) of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (*NWO*), the Provincial Government of Fryslân, the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen and the *Berie foar it Frysk* (Frisian Language Board) provided funds for the research project of which this publication is a result. Finally, I am grateful to the editors of *Philosophia Reformata* for their permission to republish the relevant article in the current publication (see Part 2). Naturally, I alone am responsible for the contents.

Ab van Langevelde  
Groningen, September 1997

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# Part 1.

## SUMMARY OF DOOYEWEERDIAN STRUCTURAL THEORY

### 1.1. Introduction

It is impossible, of course, to discuss Dooyeweerd's theory of structures in detail within the scope of this publication. Nevertheless, this summary of some important concepts may suffice to give the reader enough insight into Dooyeweerdian ontology (= theory of being) to be able to understand Part 2.<sup>1</sup>

We experience in reality an enormous *diversity* of things, plants, animals, human beings, events etc. This striking heterogeneity can be seen at a given moment, but also in developments through time. The diversity in question does not mean that there is no important *coherence* between phenomena as something like the food chain may serve to illustrate. Using the Dooyeweerdian theory of structures this heterogeneity and coherence can be theoretically mapped. Three important Dooyeweerdian concepts are discussed for that purpose here: modal aspect, individuality structure and disclosure. Special attention is devoted in that context to the concept of regional culture, so important for Part 2. Finally, consideration is given to the scientific usefulness of Dooyeweerd's theory of structures.

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<sup>1</sup> Readers who want to know more about Dooyeweerd's thought are referred to L. Kalsbeek, *Contours of a Christian Philosophy* (Amsterdam 1975), R. A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality* (Notre Dame and London 1991), R. van Woudenberg, *Gelovend denken* (Amsterdam and Kampen 1992), H. G. Geertsema *et al.* (eds.), *Herman Dooyeweerd 1894-1977, Breedte en actualiteit van zijn filosofie* (Kampen 1994), R. van Woudenberg (ed.), *Kennis en werkelijkheid* (Amsterdam and Kampen 1996) and, of course, to H. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (4 vols.) (Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1953 ff.). See also 'Works by and about Herman Dooyeweerd', Select bibliography in C. I. McIntire (ed.), *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd* (Lanham, New York and London 1985) 173-77.

## 1.2. Modal Aspects

Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977), a Dutch philosopher long associated with the Free University in Amsterdam, does not start his analysis of the diversity in reality by distinguishing all kinds of phenomena. No, he begins with an investigation of so-called *modal aspects*. These are *ways* or *modes of being* and also *manners* in which we can *experience* reality. All "things" in reality "have" these modal aspects or - more strictly speaking - they *function* in one way or another in all these modes of being. In the related article (see Part 2) these aspects are also referred to as *modalities*. Figure 1 presents an overview of the Dooyeweerdian aspects. This schedule shows the interdisciplinary character of the Dooyeweerdian structural theory. Namely, the different modalities correspond with basic disciplines in science having their own specific theories, concepts and laws. Think of physical, biological, economic and ethical laws. The connection between modal aspects and scientific disciplines makes clear that the modalities can also be qualified as *explanatory* aspects.<sup>2</sup> The following may serve as an explanation of important characteristics of the modalities.

**Figure 1. Dooyeweerd's aspects**

Aspects	Meaning kernels
1 numerical	discrete quantity
2 spatial	continuous extension
3 kinematic	motion
4 physical	energy
5 biotic	life
6 sensitive	sensitivity
7 logical, analytical	clarifying distinction
8 cultural-historical	formative power according to a free concept or design
9 linguistic	symbolic meaning
10 social	intercourse
11 economic	weighing values
12 aesthetic	beauty, harmony
13 juridical	justice, retribution
14 moral	love in temporal relationships, caring
15 pistic, faith, religious	belief, deepest spiritual orientation

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<sup>2</sup> M. D. Stafleu, 'Modelvorming als heuristisch instrument in het wetenschappelijk ontsluitingsproces', *Philosophia Reformata* 60 (1995) 10.

In the first place, these modalities are *universal*. Everything in reality *potentially* functions in one way or another in all the aspects. In this regard Dooyeweerd makes a distinction between *subject* and *object functions*. An example may clarify this. A tree functions as a *subject* where the laws from the first five modalities from the numerical to the biotic aspect are concerned. In the later aspects a tree does not function as a subject: it cannot experience beauty, it cannot weigh values, and it does not join in religious activities like prayer. But in the later aspects it *potentially* can function as an *object*. The potential economic object function points to the possibility that a tree can be sold: it has value. The fact that the tree can be seen as part of creation shows the potential object function in the religious aspect. So as soon as human beings relate to the tree, object functions appear. Another way of approaching this issue is to define the subject functions as *active* functions where object functions can be circumscribed as *passive* functions.

In the second place, each aspect has its own specific characteristic, or its own *meaning kernel* in the terminology of Dooyeweerd. Figure 1 also provides the reader with a description of these kernels. A kernel can be regarded as the core of a modality.

In the third place, Dooyeweerd stresses the *irreducibility* of the modalities. The aspects cannot be reduced to each other. If reduction were actually successful, the modality in question would have to be removed from the schedule. Namely, it would thus actually be "included" in another, more basic modality and therefore be superfluous in the relevant schedule. Some examples may illustrate what is meant by reduction.

The first example concerns the story about Achilles running a race against a turtle, told by the philosopher Zeno of Elea. At the beginning of the race the turtle is given a head start. Achilles runs after the turtle, overtakes it and wins the contest. At least, this is what is happening according to our sensory perception. But according to Zeno we are deceived. In reality it is impossible for Achilles to overtake the turtle; the moment Achilles reaches the point where the turtle was shortly before, it has already moved on. According to Zeno, reason unmasks our human senses in this classic example. In Dooyeweerd's view this is incorrect: the purpose of science is to provide real insight into sensory perceptions and not to deny them. Zeno - according to Dooyeweerd - analyzes movement in terms of space, or, in other words, he assumes that the kinematic aspect can be reduced to the spatial aspect. This inevitably leads to an *antinomy* or *paradox* in Zeno's thought: our senses are not taken seriously and our sensory perception is not really clarified. Dooyeweerd, however, assumes that reality is structured in such a way that it is impossible for antinomies to occur. If they do show up in theoretical thought after all, this is indicative of an error in reasoning.

Other examples in science are the widespread reduction of biotic phenomena to physical ones and the familiar Marxist reduction of law and ethics to completely economically determined phenomena. But according to Dooyeweerd we can never gain real insight into biotic phenomena when we reduce them to physical things. Life cannot be considered to be totally explained by physical processes: it is a *biotic* phenomenon. The same holds for reduction of law and ethics to economic phenomena.

In the fourth place, the irreducibility of the modal aspects does not mean that they do not *relate to each other*. There is a clear *coherence* between the different ways of being.

1. The order of the aspects is not random. The schedule of aspects is constructed in such a way that the earlier aspects form the *foundation (substratum)* of the later ones. Therefore the aspects that precede a specific modality are called its *substrate* or *founding* modalities while the later aspects are typified as its *superstrate* modalities. For example, the numerical aspect is the founding modality of the spatial aspect, and the social mode of being forms the basis, with the other earlier aspects, of the economic aspect of reality. Meanwhile, this does not affect the irreducibility of the aspects at all. The conception of founding aspects is particularly relevant for Part 2. The linguistic and social modalities are important founding aspects for the economic mode of being. I interpret this as follows. Communication or, in other words, the use of symbols - verbal and nonverbal - is closely related to social contact, while this contact is necessary for an exchange transaction and important for production activity, which both are qualified by the economic aspect. When we realize that the aspects can also be considered to be explanatory modes of being, it is very strange from a Dooyeweerdian viewpoint that linguistic variables do so very seldom enter into economic analyses, since the linguistic aspect is such an important founding function for economic life!<sup>3</sup>

Thus non-reduction does not imply a lack of ordered connection - for example, that physical conditions are not very important for life: namely, the physical aspect is directly foundational for the biotic modality.

2. The modalities are linked via so-called *anticipations* and *retrocipations*. Though each modality is *sovereign within its own sphere*, each is also *universal within its own sphere*. In other words, each aspect is represented in all the other modalities by means of a specific structural moment. Thus the economic aspect, so important in Part 2, contains a spatial structural moment in it. Concepts like 'market area' and 'labour market region' refer to that moment. The universality of an aspect within its own

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<sup>3</sup> For the neglect of linguistic variables in economic analyses see F. Grin, 'The Economics of Language: Match or Mismatch?', *International Political Science Review* 15 (1994) 26.



sphere does not contradict its sovereignty within its own sphere: within the economic aspect the economic structural moment is sovereign in that it is the decisive or ruling *primus inter pares*.

The retrocipations and anticipations are closely connected with the foundational sequence in the list of aspects. This can be illustrated by means of two economic concepts. Cost-benefit analysis shows the analytical aspect as a structural moment within the economic modality: a clear example of a retrocipation. The economic aspect, weighing of values being the description of its meaning kernel, contains a clear anticipation to the juridical aspect: in the process of weighing, *righteously* done, an effort is made to do *justice* to all the different ways of being. One may refer here to Justitia's *scales*. So anticipations relate to later aspects, and retrocipations to earlier ones. It will be clear that the arithmetic aspect lacks retrocipations and that the faith aspect lacks anticipations because of their terminal positions in the schedule of aspects.

In the fifth place, in connection with the modalities, Dooyeweerd makes a distinction between the *law-side* and the *subject-side* of reality. Each phenomenon is subject to several laws corresponding to the different aspects. The earlier aspects correspond to *determinative, natural* laws while the later ones - after the sensitive aspect - are linked to *normative* laws. So physical phenomena are primarily subject to determinative natural laws while the economic modality is structured by normative economic principles. Regarding the normative laws Dooyeweerd introduces the concept of *positivization*. This concept refers to the process of working out the normative structural principles into specific, concrete norms. Thus the normative economic principle can be positivized into specific economic norms. In Part 2 the normative economic principle is concisely summarized in terms of value surplus and stewardship. This general principle, though, must be positivized into economic norms for specific situations in concrete societal structures. An example of such an economic norm is avoidance of financial losses in business firms. Of course, an important issue is what is actually realized in human behaviour of these economic norms. Positivization is an issue regarding the law-side of reality while concrete actualization finds place on the subject-side of reality.

Finally, one must notice the open, not dogmatic character of the Dooyeweerdian schedule of aspects. There is actually a continuing debate about the list. The following may exemplify this.

1. Ouweneel advocates the splitting of the sensitive aspect into two different modalities, a perceptive and a sensitive aspect.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> W. J. Ouweneel, *De leer van de mens* (Amsterdam 1986) 55-126.

2. Seerveld makes a plea for another position of the aesthetic modality within the schedule and for a different definition of the relevant meaning kernel.<sup>5</sup>

3. Part 2 contains a clear example of a discussion concerning the meaning kernel of the economic aspect and the corresponding normative structural principle.

The aspectual approach is for Dooyeweerd himself the starting point (not the end!) of the analysis of entities or phenomena in reality. He supposes all these entities to have their own *individuality structure*. The next section expands upon that concept and the way one can analyze these individuality structures (or *thing structures* or *entitary structures*) by using the modal aspects discussed above.

### 1.3. Individuality Structures

In everyday life we experience the presence of all kinds of entities in reality: trees, stones, people, animals, love, thunder and lightning, but also families, business firms, government bodies, etc. Dooyeweerd postulates that all kinds of entities have their own specific individuality or entitary structure. This structure, as we have seen, can be analyzed by using the aspectual viewpoint.

From this modal viewpoint, in Dooyeweerdian analysis, the *qualifying aspect* of the relevant individuality structure is an important element. While every entity in principle functions in all modalities, all modalities are not equally important for every entity. The qualifying modality is the most conspicuous aspect of an entity. It specifically typifies an individuality structure: it is the *primus inter pares*. In that manner the physical aspect qualifies a stone, while a painting is typified by the aesthetic modality. In the same way, it is possible to qualify *societal* structures such as families and business firms by pointing to the moral and economic aspects, respectively. These qualifying modalities also *colour* the role of the other aspects. Thus the juridical aspect becomes visible in business firms in *business law*. And, indeed, families manifest an economic aspect in the sphere of *family economy*. Consider, for example, the constraints that spring from the family budget. In this way, Dooyeweerd's theory of structures - again - accounts for an important element of *coherence* in reality. The qualifying modality conditions and colours the functioning of the other modal aspects in the context of a specific entity. By doing so it provides an important element of *unity* in connection with individuality structures.

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<sup>5</sup> See the contribution of Birtwistle to Van Woudenberg, *Kennis en werkelijkheid*, 359-62.

The qualifying modality also determines the law that functions as the *primus inter pares* for a particular individuality structure. This law colours the involvement of the other laws, both natural and normative. The qualifying law determines - according to Dooyeweerd - the *destination* of a specific individuality structure. Thus the destination of a family lies in love and caring, the meaning kernel of the moral modality. The positivization of all other normative laws within the family context has to find place in the perspective of love and caring, thus from a moral point of view. This means that punishment and retribution in connection with the bringing up of children - in which the juridical aspect appears within the family - is coloured by love and caring by the parents. This differs strongly from punishment and retribution regarding criminals in a state context. Not that love and caring disappear behind the horizon there, but public justice is the leading principle in the case of handling criminals in the state context. It needs to be stressed here that the notion of a qualifying modality is as important for the subject-side as it is for the law-side of reality.

From a modal viewpoint, next to the qualifying function there is an additional important dimension in analyzing entitary structures: the *founding* function. This function can be clarified by looking at some *societal* structures. The family, for example, is founded in the biotic modality and therefore this societal structure can be typified as a *natural* societal structure. Normally, children in a family spring from the *sexual* relationship of their parents and in that way they receive their *genetic* endowment: these are clear references to biological phenomena and related natural laws that form the basis for a family. A business firm, on the other hand, is founded by the cultural-historical modality and can as such be qualified as an *organized* societal structure.<sup>6</sup> Business firms gradually developed in *history*, as family-related agricultural activities grew into separate industries and services through a process of societal specialisation and differentiation.

Besides using the aspects, Dooyeweerd employs the concept of *enkapsis* to analyze the entitary structures. Where individuality structures account for the uniqueness of sorts of "things" in themselves, enkapsis points to the uniqueness of entities *in their relationships with other "things"*. A simple example of enkapsis is the relationship between a bird and its nest. The bird's nest functions as a subject in the first four modalities in the Dooyeweerdian schedule, while it is qualified by its destination in its object function in connection with the bird's life. Thus a nest is qualified by the sensitive modality. Since the concept of enkapsis is not particularly relevant for Part 2, I just want to refer in this regard to the literature mentioned in the first section of Part 1.

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Griffioen and Van Woudenberg in Van Woudenberg, *Kennis en werkelijkheid*, 251-52.

In bringing this section to a close, it is worth mentioning the relative modesty of the analysis of individuality structures in the Dooyeweerdian approach. Though we experience the individual identity of individual things continuously in a naive way in everyday life, according to Dooyeweerd we cannot grasp this individual identity in scientific analysis: things retain their mystery. According to Dooyeweerd, scientific analysis can only take place regarding the individuality structure of *sorts* of entities. Thus, I cannot analyze the identity of the chair I am sitting in right now, but it is possible to investigate the identity of chairs *in general*.

## 1.4. Dynamics and Disclosure

Consideration of three related concepts helps to clarify the great importance of dynamics within the context of Dooyeweerd's structural theory: time, the cultural-historical aspect and disclosure. These concepts are helpful in the analysis of the diversity of entities springing from developments in time (see section 1, above).

Time indicates that reality is not static but that it is a dynamic whole. That is why Dooyeweerd also refers to the modal aspects as *temporal* aspects: phenomena function in the several distinguished modal aspects *within time*. The temporality of the aspects also appears in the speaking of structural *moments* in connection with the notion of universality within the proper sphere of each modal aspect.

The cultural-historical aspect is a dynamic modality *par excellence*; culture plays an important part in it and this involves - the point bears repeating - formation through power according to a free design or concept. This aspect is directly connected with the notion of *disclosure*.

Disclosure refers to reality, which is involved in a process of *unfolding* and "*opening*": a process in which more and more potentials in reality are actualized. Stafleu gives a useful metaphor for disclosure in connection with the contribution of human-kind to this process: a landscape that is gradually provided with roads, water supplies, electricity and gas services, telephone and sewerage.<sup>7</sup>

Disclosure is closely connected with the concept of anticipation within Dooyeweerdian ontology. In Part 2 it is stated that the economic aspect can be "opened" in the direction of the superstrate aspects in the process of positivization of the normative economic principle. The faith aspect plays a major role in that it provides people with fundamental guidelines for development. The value, for instance, that is attached to

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<sup>7</sup> Stafleu, 'Modelvorming', 1.

financial income and property in someone's personal faith is extremely relevant for economic decisions. This is all worked out at length in Part 2. The superstrate aspects of the economic mode of being are introduced there as "opening" aspects.

## 1.5. Regional Culture

This section is used to work out a specific example of an analysis of an entitary structure, namely that of *regional culture*. This is directly relevant for the related article in *Philosophia Reformata* (see Part 2).

A very general definition of culture is the following: the way people shape their lives. From a Dooyeweerdian perspective we can look at culture from a modal and from an entitary viewpoint. We start with the aspectual point of view here.

The meaning kernel of the cultural-historical aspect is, as we have seen, formative power according to a free concept. Because of the universality of each modality, each modal aspect has its own cultural-historical structural moment. This surfaces in reality in phenomena like economic power, juridical power, social power and the like.<sup>8</sup> Because it is foundational towards the linguistic, social, economic, aesthetic, juridical, moral and pistic modalities, the cultural-historical way of being plays a significant role in these aspects. From that perspective the cultural-historical aspect together with the later modalities can be qualified as the *culture side of reality*, as distinct from the *nature side of reality*.<sup>9</sup> The fact that the cultural-historical modality directly founds the linguistic aspect points to the important relationship between culture and language: language is culturally very basic. Many cultural differences follow the track of linguistic diversity. But the linguistic aspect in its turn is normally involved in a process of disclosure towards the later aspects of which the faith aspect plays a leading role.

Having looked at culture in its variety from a modal viewpoint, one may proceed to consider it from the entitary perspective: culture as a phenomenon or entity in our world and experience, functioning in all the Dooyeweerdian modalities. Culture, though functioning in principle in all the modes of being, is manifest especially in the post-cultural-historical aspects: these are the modalities where important cultural

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<sup>8</sup> The word "power" should be interpreted here within the context of the cultural-historical modality. All human activities presuppose a certain kind of power. The concept of power is definitely not used here in a violent sense.

<sup>9</sup> See for this distinction Vlot in his contribution to Van Woudenberg, *Kennis en werkelijkheid*, 205.

diversity may be discovered. But cultural diversity does not necessarily surface in all the modalities of the culture side. So the economic system of two countries may be largely the same while important differences occur in handling moral issues.

An important point of consideration is the spatial distribution of cultural differences around the world, an issue for cultural geography. Physical barriers like mountains and oceans may form decisive spatial frontiers between different cultures<sup>10</sup>, just as frontiers between national states do. Particularly relevant for Part 2 is the question of the possible presence of spatial cultural variety *within national states*: the appearance of *regional culture*. In West European minority language regions we see clear examples of specific regional cultures connected with the minority languages there. But - the next question - is this cultural variety limited to strictly linguistic diversity in these minority language regions, or are additional language-related cultural differences present as well? And how does this cultural diversity function in a bilingual context, where two language groups live together? What does this mean for the interaction between possible language-related cultural differences?

In Part 2 examples are given of such possibly additional language-related cultural differences. Reference is made, for example, to spiritual differences (pistic modality) between the two major language groups in Wales next to a possibly corollary variety in entrepreneurial attitudes in business firms (economic modality). Regarding the faith aspect it should be stressed that this has a leading role also in connection with the disclosure of the linguistic aspect. This should *normally* prevent people from giving their language an *absolute* significance in their lives. The role of a minority language in regional culture is thus clearly relativized. In connection with the entrepreneurial attitude Part 2 examines the value concept, in my opinion a basic notion for entrepreneurship. Another example of the importance of linguistic differences for variety in entrepreneurship is given by Van Langevelde and Pellenbarg.<sup>11</sup>

And, of course, whenever the position of minority languages is protected in law we see a clear cultural variety within a nation state associated with the juridical aspect: special provisions are made with respect to language use in different domains. This juridical modality also surfaces in internal rules in enterprises regarding language use.

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<sup>10</sup> Here, the physical-chemical aspect surfaces as an important founding modality of the cultural-historical aspect. Differences in physical-chemical circumstances, like fertility of the soil, may cause a variety in *agricultural* activities.

<sup>11</sup> A. P. van Langevelde and P. H. Pellenbarg, What's in a Frisian Business Name? Region and Regional Language as Symbols in Private Enterprise in the Netherlands, Work in Progress September 1997.

The aesthetic aspect can be at stake, furthermore, when the bilingual situation results in a specific regional tradition in literature in the minority language.

So, when we look at these "opening" modalities of the linguistic aspect two notions are important. First, the linguistic aspect is foundational towards its "opening" aspects. This points to the *fundamental* role of language in culture. Second, the role of the later modalities in the process of disclosure of the linguistic aspect means that the role of language is clearly *relativized*.<sup>12</sup>

Well then, given what has been said here thus far, *regional culture can be defined as a distinct way of positivization of one or more post-cultural-historical normative principles within a specific region located in one or more national states*.<sup>13</sup> While much more can be said about the issue of regional culture, the above are some suggestions from a Dooyeweerdian perspective.

## 1.6. Scientific Usefulness

Application of Dooyeweerd's structural theory has several advantages, in the areas of systematics, heuristics and relevance to policy.

The list of aspects is clearly *systematic* as well as essentially interdisciplinary. Consequently, the ideal of an interdisciplinary approach is not a vague notion; it can be worked out in a consistent way from the outset. However, this does not mean that in scientific research attention always should be paid to all aspects. But an awareness of the fundamental importance of all modalities is the starting point of an analysis. The field of research may be restricted in the process, but one always begins from the total spectrum of the structural theory.

The systematic nature of Dooyeweerd's structural theory makes it an ideal *heuristic* instrument. It can function as a grid, which can be confronted with reality in analysis. In this way, the most important aspects can be discovered and the corresponding questions and hypotheses formulated. The related paper in *Philosophia Reformata* (see Part 2) is a clear example of that.

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<sup>12</sup> It is important, I think, to recognize the significance of regional languages for regional culture and for regional economic development. But, this recognition should not degenerate into a *cult* with respect to regional languages. In my opinion, this is a matter of avoiding the *Scylla* of "neglect" and the *Charybdis* of "worship".

<sup>13</sup> Kurdish regional culture, for example, is distributed across the boundaries of several national states.

As is mentioned in Part 2, the normative character of Dooyeweerdian ontology provides its user with a clear *relevance to policy*. For normative principles are fully integrated in the relevant structural theory: they are considered to belong to the very structure of reality. So thought can be devoted not only to a good and clear definition of the respective normative principles, but also to meaningful ways of positivization - for example, of the normative economic principle in regional economic policy issues. This all is in contrast with scientific activity that springs from a positivistic approach in which norms are not only distinguished from but even almost completely separated from facts. To be perfectly clear, this does not imply that a scholar who uses a Dooyeweerdian approach can provide policy makers with cut and dried solutions for societal problems. I want to expand upon that for a while.

When scholars in the relevant field are asked to give advice regarding, e.g., a good regional economic policy for a specific West European minority language region, both a positivism-oriented and a Dooyeweerd-oriented scholar will ask in reverse what goals the politicians have in that respect. In my opinion, though, from a Dooyeweerdian perspective it can be stressed that these goals are strictly limited by, e.g., the normative structure of a business firm and the relevant economic principle, not to mention other normative principles. In other words, a large variety of political goals but not each one can be set legitimately within the perspective of the normative economic principle! I do not want to say that there is no room for a critical position towards goals from a positivistic point of departure. One may refer to the fact that financial losses have to be prevented in business firms. But this critical position springs more from what is happening in the concrete economic system in force than from the normative principles that are given for that system. So there is a relatively large danger of a *status quo* criticism in a positivistic approach.

Concisely formulated, a Dooyeweerd-oriented analysis will manifest a more critical attitude towards the goals that politicians try to achieve.



Dooyeweerd's theory of structures has actually been worked out in various scientific disciplines. A valuable overview of relevant literature (much of which is in English) can be found in Van Woudenberg, with examples from the fields of mathematics, physics, anthropology, sociology, economics, political theory, etc.<sup>14</sup> Other interesting examples can be found in Griffioen and Balk.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Van Woudenberg, *Kennis en werkelijkheid*.

<sup>15</sup> S. Griffioen and B.M. Balk (ed.), *Christian Philosophy at the Close of the Twentieth Century. Assessment and Perspective* (Kampen 1995).

**Part 2.**  
**BILINGUALISM IN THE BUSINESS WORLD IN WEST  
EUROPEAN MINORITY LANGUAGE REGIONS:  
PROFIT OR LOSS?**  
**Reprint Article *Philosophia Reformata* 1996, Pp. 135-59.**

## **2.1. Introduction**

Europe during the last decade has witnessed a growing interest in the position of minorities in general and of minority languages in particular. This interest undoubtedly bears some connection with the influx of aliens into western Europe, and with the at times exceptionally violent outbreak of ethnic conflicts in some former East Bloc countries. Language plays a vital role in matters of ethnicity and identity. The growing interest of which we speak has found expression in the *European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages*,<sup>16</sup> which establishes a number of rights related to minority languages.

There is also increased interest in the position of minority languages in relation to the economic sector, in Catalonia, Fryslân and Wales, for example. Leprêtre observes that much has been achieved through a language policy of support for Catalan but that a great deal remains to be done on this point in the economic field.<sup>17</sup> In Wales organizations like *Menter a Busnes* (Enterprise and Business) endeavor to stimulate entrepreneurship amongst Welsh speakers, while the Welsh Language Board works to stimulate the use of Welsh in business.<sup>18</sup> In Fryslân language policy is actually put to use to stimulate the economy. In the *Kadernota Taalbeleid* (Document on Language Policy) there is implicit reference to the economic potential of the Frisian language,<sup>19</sup> in the request to the *Berie foar it Frysk* (Frisian Language Board) for advice concerning what the Frisian language could mean for economic development. And the

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<sup>16</sup> Council of Europe, *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (Strasbourg 1992).

<sup>17</sup> M. Leprêtre, *The Catalan Language Today* (Barcelona 1992).

<sup>18</sup> L. Dafis (ed.), *Economic Development and Lesser Used Languages: Partnerships for Action*, Proceedings Conference Castell Newydd Emlyn September 1993 (Llanbedr Pont Steffan 1993) 89.

<sup>19</sup> Provinciale Staten van Friesland, *Kadernota Taalbeleid* (Leeuwarden 1991) 42.

*European Charter*, mentioned above, devotes separate attention to the economic sector.

The connection made in Fryslân between language policy and regional economic policy is most interesting. While formerly the Provincial Authority often petitioned the central government for financial support for the position of Frisian, another tack is also being tried today: to what extent can Frisian provide an economic stimulus? This change of course agrees nicely with the new trend in regional economic policy in the European Union: namely, assess the strengths and weaknesses of your region and endeavor to capitalize on its strengths as much as possible. In Fryslân the regional language is clearly regarded as a potential strong point, in certain respects, for economic development. This approach could prove to be fruitful for other minority language regions in West Europe and perhaps for other multilingual regions as well. For multilingualism within national states is the rule more often than it is the exception.<sup>20</sup>

The approach taken by the Provincial Authority of Fryslân requires deep insight into the connection between linguistic and economic variables. Earlier I surveyed this relationship at the regional level for Fryslân, as a case study for West European minority language areas.<sup>21</sup> Migration is found to play a significant role.<sup>22</sup>

I argue for *the construction of a model for the analysis of questions of language and economy at the microlevel of the individual firm*.<sup>23</sup> For the individual enterprise is the core of economic life, and at that level the operation of specific mechanisms in the economic sphere is often quite clear. In this article such a model of the firm is developed on the basis of Herman Dooyeweerd's theory of structures (see Part 1 for a summary). It is worth noting that Commins too calls attention to the importance of

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<sup>20</sup> L. Pietersen, *Taalsociologie* (2d edition) (Groningen 1980) 57.

<sup>21</sup> A. P. van Langevelde, 'Language and Economy in Friesland: A First Step Towards Development of a Theory', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 85 (1994) 67-77.

<sup>22</sup> A. P. van Langevelde, 'Migration and Language in Friesland', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 14 (1993) 393-409.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Van Langevelde, 'Language and Economy', 74.

microlevel research in connection with the relationship between linguistic and economic variables,<sup>24</sup> and that he is supported in doing so by Keane, Griffith and Dunn.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.2. Aim

*This article aims to develop a Dooyeweerdian model of the firm whereby the meaning of bilingualism for the management of businesses in West European minority language regions can be analyzed.* The following observations may serve to elucidate this aim.

The model is intended as a starting point for empirical research. It should provide a basis for the formulation of questions for fieldwork. Furthermore, together with the results of that fieldwork, this model should provide clarity and direction for the language policy makers in West European minority language regions.

By bilingualism in West European minority language regions is meant the presence of two groups of people having different mother tongues, namely, a national language and a regional autochthonous one. Possible linguistic and sociolinguistic nuances are not examined here.

The assumption is that bilingualism is a complicating factor for business management compared to more homogeneous language situations. This does not necessarily entail a hindrance to progress: complex circumstances may very well present significant opportunities.

Management is central. To use Dooyeweerdian terminology, management means the persons invested with the greatest part of the economic power in a firm, which they can bring to bear to shape their company according to a free design. Their extensive economic power is directly connected with the authority they can exercise over employees.

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<sup>24</sup> P. Commins, 'Socioeconomic Development and Language Maintenance in the Gaeltacht', *International Journal for Sociology of Language* 70 (1988) 20.

<sup>25</sup> M. J. Keane, B. Griffith and J. W. Dunn, 'Regional Development and Language Maintenance', *Environment and Planning A* 25 (1993) 404.

The model is designed primarily for the analysis of the relationship between bilingualism and economy in West European minority language regions.<sup>26</sup> Yet this model of the firm is so general in character that it can be applied much more broadly. Looking beyond western Europe, one might consider applying it to South Africa but also to countries that have superseded the former Soviet Union. Multilingualism plays an important role in these areas.

A model of the firm is of course not suited unconditionally for studying developments at the regional level. An example may serve to make this clear. When a baker in a Frisian village sees his sales increase as the result of a Frisian-language advertising campaign, this may not mean growth in production for the Frisian economy as a whole. Namely, it is doubtful that people are going to eat more bread and cakes than they did before. The baker's increased sales will therefore most likely prove to have come at the expense of other bakers in Fryslân. In the end, regional production does not increase. We shall not deal with this aspect of the matter any further here.

The continuation of this article is organized as follows. First, an inventory is made of the existing micro-economic models that are available for studying our theme. What added value, in comparison to these, does a Dooyeweerdian model offer? Next, on the basis of Dooyeweerd's theory of structures, a general model of the firm is developed that will be applied to a business in the bilingual context of West European minority language regions. In the process, questions are formulated for empirical research.

### 2.3. Microeconomic Models

This section examines the usefulness of existing microeconomic models of the firm. Three main types are selected for consideration: neoclassical economic models, models from managerial economics and behavioral models.<sup>27</sup> For an extensive discussion of these models one may refer to Koutsoyiannis.<sup>28</sup> Do these models offer an adequate instrument for fundamental analysis of the theme of this essay?

Neoclassical models of the firm are designed for purposes of analyzing the allocation of production factors and the process of price formation in national and inter-national

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<sup>26</sup> In F. Grin, 'The Economic Approach to Minority Languages', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 11 (1990) 158-59 is discussed which regions these are.

<sup>27</sup> See for this classification F. C. van Niekerk Fourie, *A Structural Theory of the Firm* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University) (Cambridge MA 1981) 212.

<sup>28</sup> A. Koutsoyiannis, *Modern Microeconomics* (2d edition) (London and Basingstoke 1979).

economies. On the basis of highly simplified assumptions, conclusions are drawn for a firm with an eye to the entire branch and to the national and inter-national economy. Decision making in an enterprise is thereby reduced to the actions of a profit-maximizing entrepreneur whose choices are based on complete information about all available alternatives. Production factors are rewarded according to their marginal financial productivity, or financial return on the last unit. These characteristics render neoclassical models little suited for our theme.

In the first place, neoclassical models are not really models for firms.<sup>29</sup> Their focus is more on the businessman as *homo economicus* than on the company.

In the second place, these models are not designed for the purpose of carrying out analyses at the level of the individual firm: their ultimate focus is at the macrolevel.<sup>30</sup> Now, the macrolevel is also pertinent to our theme. Yet I should not want to get into the level of the minority language *region* without first having made a thorough analysis of the problem at the level of the *firm*.

In the third place, it is disputed both that entrepreneurs want to *maximize* profits and that they strive for profits *alone*.<sup>31</sup> May an entrepreneur not have other objectives in mind with a firm, such as a high quality product or a congenial way of working with people? In the latter case, respect for a person's linguistic identity could be important.

In the fourth place, the postulated reward of the production factors according to their marginal financial productivity is arguable. For it does not take into account the appearance of possible "x-inefficiency",<sup>32</sup> that is, that an employee may for whatever reason not function optimally. From data on Quebec it is clear that the linguistic background can play a role here.<sup>33</sup> To be sure, the situation in Quebec differs in many ways from the situation in West European minority language areas, but for all that, it gives pause.

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<sup>29</sup> Van Niekerk Fourie, *A Structural Theory*, Abstract, 1.

<sup>30</sup> M. H. Spencer, *Managerial Economics* (3d edition) (Homewood 1968) 24.

<sup>31</sup> R.M. Cyert and J. G. March, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (Englewood Cliffs NJ 1963) 9-10.

<sup>32</sup> H. Leibenstein, *Beyond Economic Man* (Cambridge MA and London 1980).

<sup>33</sup> Office de la Langue Française, *Etude sur les avantages et les coûts de la francisation*, Résumé de rapport d'Econosult Inc. (Montréal 1980).

The managerial and behavioral models of the firm offer a more realistic approach than do the neoclassical models. Namely, they view a firm as a coalition of groups of interested participants who can pursue different, conflicting goals.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, these models do not incorporate the unrealistic neoclassical reward postulate.

The managerial models proceed from the assumption that management are not so much intent upon maximum profit for the firm as they are upon maximizing their firm's utility for themselves. Of course, corporate profits do function as an important marginal condition in this regard. A certain minimum profit - so the reasoning goes - is necessary to keep stockholders satisfied and thereby prevent management's being replaced following a takeover occasioned by a decline in the value of the company's shares.

The behavioral theory of the firm looks at the individual within the organization even more intently than does managerial economics. Spencer accurately typifies the behavioral approach as follows:

Thus, when the individual is recognized as an actor within the organization, the complexity and stability of his environment are introduced as elements which play a major role in affecting his choices and plans. Drawing on psychology and sociology, concepts of role and status are introduced as vehicles for analyzing the interaction between the individual and his organization. Personality and environment are seen to play a part in the decision process, as do cognition, perception, and belief.<sup>35</sup>

In the behavioral approach, attention is paid to how managers deal with conflicting objectives. Maximizing their utility function is not the issue. No, the firm's leadership endeavor to satisfy everyone to some extent.

Managerial economics and, to an even greater extent, the behavioral models offer important points of reference for the theme of this article. Namely, they expressly allow room for analysis of the different language groups within and round about a firm. Moreover, these models proceed from a more realistic formulation of business aims. Furthermore, as the citation from Spencer shows, in the behavioral theory of the firm there is opportunity for an interdisciplinary approach. Both Edwards and Grin

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<sup>34</sup> Koutsoyiannis, *Modern Microeconomics*, 324.

<sup>35</sup> Spencer, *Managerial Economics*, 36.

stress the importance of such an approach for investigating the position of minority languages.<sup>36</sup>

*Yet there is an important limitation to the managerial and behavioral models: various groups of people may indeed be connected with a firm, but that is a far cry from a coalition of participants.*

Generally, a coalition involves similar partners, as of political parties in a governing coalition or national states in a military alliance. This cannot be compared with the strikingly heterogeneous parties in and round about a firm: employees, consumers, civil authorities, etc.

Parties to a coalition conclude a verbal or written agreement. Parliamentary parties, for example, may negotiate an accord to serve as the basis of a coalition cabinet. In the case of a firm, there is no such consultation between all the interested parties. If agreements are negotiated, they are partial and involve specific groups in matters like labor contracts and sales contracts.

Finally, a coalition shares a common goal. This too is otherwise for a firm. Talk of a shared goal agreed to by all parties is out of the question in the business context. It must be kept in mind that the business concept of a coalition extends not only to internal but also to external parties such as consumers. There are undoubtedly common interests, but that is quite different from a common goal.

Thus the notion of a coalition seems unhappily chosen. Yet what, in that case, would a satisfactory conception be? Having reviewed the different models, one can state that "economic theory has no unified conception of the firm".<sup>37</sup> At the same time, however, I am convinced that there is a clear need to arrive at such a generally workable definition. On this foundation a general theory of the firm can be constructed and then worked out in various specific directions.<sup>38</sup> This is also of importance for our present subject.

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<sup>36</sup> J. Edwards, 'Notes for a Minority-Language Typology: Procedures and Justification', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 11 (1990) 139.  
F. Grin, 'Economic Approaches to Language and Language Planning: An Introduction', *International Journal for Sociology of Language* 121 (1996) 1-16.

<sup>37</sup> Van Niekerk Fourie, *A Structural Theory*, Abstract, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Koutsoyiannis, *Modern Microeconomics*, 551-52.



At this point I want to introduce a Dooyeweerdian conception of the firm as an alternative to the models discussed thus far. Given Dooyeweerd's ontology, one can define a firm as *a societal structure qualified by the economic aspect*. This general definition offers three advantages over the other models.

This definition avoids the notion of a coalition without ignoring the fact that there are different groups with different interests. It views a firm as an independent societal structure having a distinctive character of its own. This distinctive nature of an enterprise is implicit in its economic destination. That the destination of a firm is economic does not mean that the various groups connected with it will not have diverse goals. Yet these goals may not conflict with the economically qualified destination. They will, of course, influence the way in which the economic normative principle (hereafter: economic principle) is positivized. Management, as an important bearer of economic power, plays a significant role in this process of positivization.

The economic principle represents a critical moment in a model of the firm built on the Dooyeweerdian last. It is a touchstone for the goals formulated by a company. Moreover, this principle imbues the Dooyeweerdian model of the firm with a clear relevance to policy. Civil authorities, for example, can call businesses to account for the manner in which they positivize it. They may do that during regular consultations with employers' organizations, or in contacts with individual firms about licenses and permits.

Finally, in its aspectual approach to reality Dooyeweerd's ontology features a systematic interdisciplinarity. All the various aspects that may be relevant to a theme are not thrown on the same heap. Instead, they are brought into coherent connection with one another.

Thus the structure of a firm is determined by its qualification via the economic destination. But what is the identifying mark or meaning kernel of the economic mode of being?

## **2.4. The Economic Aspect**

Consider a number of existing definitions of the core meaning of the economic modality.

Dooyeweerd himself defines the meaning kernel of the economic aspect as:

... the sparing or frugal mode of administering scarce goods, implying an alternative choice of their destination with regard to the satisfacti-

on of different human needs. The adjectives "sparing" and "frugal" do not have the limited sense of the economical term "saving" (said of money for instance). They are only the correlatives of "scarce" and refer to our awareness that an excessive or wasteful satisfaction of a particular need at the expense of other more urgent needs is uneconomical.<sup>39</sup>

The concept of scarcity is important in this definition. Haan and Goudzwaard are critical of it: is scarcity given with creation, and does the appeal to the concept of scarcity not flow from the premise of the limitlessness of human needs?<sup>40</sup> With his definition Dooyeweerd probably connects too closely - certainly unintentionally - with the dominant western cultural perspective.

But does the fact that work is required to furnish even the basic necessities of life, such as food, not indicate that scarcity exists and needs to be overcome? Labor as such, however, fulfills a basic human need. Nowadays paid work itself is scarce. The negative aspects of doing work are related, as I see it, much more to the way in which we shape work in our culture and the brokenness of our lives than to any inherent scarcity in creation.

There is accordingly no question of *absolute* scarcity in creation, in my opinion, but only of *contextual* scarcity under specific circumstances.

According to Vollenhoven the distinguishing mark of the economic aspect is to be found in "saving while weighing values".<sup>41</sup> There is, I think, too much emphasis here on the concept of saving, even though it is clearly relativized by the adjectival construction.

The concept of saving alone is in any case insufficient for purposes of characterizing the economic aspect. On that basis, economics deteriorates into a science of efficiency, against which Haan too protests.<sup>42</sup> Economics would then investigate only the polarity between ends and means, without actually pondering either the means employed or the ends desired: an almost exclusively technical affair. That this is in fact the way things

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<sup>39</sup> H. Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia 1955) 66.

<sup>40</sup> See R. Van Woudenberg, *Gelovend denken* (Amsterdam and Kampen 1992) 102-103.

<sup>41</sup> See Van Woudenberg, *Gelovend denken*, 102.

<sup>42</sup> R. L. Haan, *Economie in principe en praktijk* (Groningen 1975) 46-58.

are often viewed in our national economies in the West says nothing about the typifying mark of the content of the economic aspect: thus some cultural criticism may be implicit in a correct formulation of the meaning kernel. Finally, the concept of saving smacks of parsimony, as if exuberant enjoyment were somehow in conflict with economic principles, which in view of the fullness of the meaning of festive activity can hardly be the case.

Haan formulates the marrow of economic science as follows:

The meaning kernel of the economic aspect may be illustrated by *barter* - the exchange of nonidentical goods or services. This social exchange, implying a weighing of interests, is economically qualified. The problem of intersubjective valuation is the problem of economics.<sup>43</sup>

Just prior to making this statement Haan calls economics "the science that investigates exchange relationships".<sup>44</sup> Several observations are in order.

Haan does not present a precise definition of the core meaning of the economic aspect. He endeavors to indicate it via such basic concepts as exchange, weighing of interests, and intersubjective valuation. As a matter of fact, I believe that in seeking to define the meaning kernel of the various aspects we may not get much further than an indication: things retain their mystery. Yet we must come as close to the center of an aspect as one may. As in the familiar children's game, the scientist is more or less "warm" or "cold".

Haan is correct: exchange is important in both economic theory and economic practice. For all that, I do not believe the concept has a place in the definition of the meaning kernel of the economic aspect. Namely, exchange is qualified by the economic aspect, to be sure, but that is not yet to say it is characteristic for the economic mode of being!<sup>45</sup> Even without exchange there is an economic aspect. Exchange is not the only way in which the social structural moment within the economic modality finds expression. An example may suffice to show that this is so.

Given a free evening at home alone, I must decide how to spend it. Shall I mow the lawn, or shall I go for a walk? This choice presupposes a process of weighing values. The social substratum that is so important for the economic aspect by no means

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<sup>43</sup> Haan, *Economie*, 79-80 (italics: Haan).

<sup>44</sup> Haan, *Economie*, 76.

<sup>45</sup> See also B. Kee, *Prijzen en produktie* (Amsterdam 1982) 251.

disappears beyond the horizon here, because in this weighing, the interests of others should be taken into account. Perhaps it would be more worthwhile to pay a visit to my sick friend. Mowing the lawn can probably better wait in any case, since my neighbors have just started a barbecue on the patio next door. In this example there is no question of exchange, but of an assessing of values *in a social context*.

For the same reason, it is unnecessary to introduce concepts such as interests and intersubjectivity into the definition of the meaning kernel. The weighing of values always occurs, namely, in a social context, directly or indirectly. Even Robinson Crusoe had the possibility of doing everything possible to reach his family and friends, as by trying to build a seaworthy boat. Moreover, I regard the terms interests and intersubjectivity as rather anthropocentric, as if our natural habitat, for example, in all its diversity, would have no value without reference to people. Taking account of the distinctive and unique value of the natural world *even apart from its meaning for man* ought to be assigned a place in the process of weighing values that is inherent in human behavior.

In a correspondence with the present writer Van Niekerk Fourie formulates the core meaning of the economic aspect as "managing a production process" but grants that he is not entirely happy with that.<sup>46</sup> I regard this definition as too heavily skewed towards the firm. Certainly a business can be typified in terms of the economic aspect, but the reverse is not the case, no matter how productive the analysis of firms may be in the search for the meaning kernel in question. Yet there is a positive side to Van Niekerk Fourie's definition. In the following section I will return to it.

My own definition of the nuclear moment or meaning kernel of the economic aspect is close to Vollenhoven's and Haan's: *weighing of values*. This presupposes a process of *assessing values*. Yet however important value assessment may be, the specific meaning of economy lies in the *weighing*. The economic aspect is thus a question more of *relative* value than it is of *nominal* value: the price *ratio* - so important in economic science - refers directly to the moment of weighing.

A consequence of my position is that the market is an economic concept not because of the exchange process but because of the weighing of values that takes place there. Societally, this weighing can be organized in other ways, as in a centrally directed economy. In that case, the process of weighing values has a collective character. In practice there is often a mixed form of free market and central direction.

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<sup>46</sup> E-mail message 3 February 1995.

My definition of the meaning kernel of the economic aspect is highly compatible with important concepts in economic science. Not only does the concept of *value* appear widely in economic science - think of surplus value, labor value, exchange or market value, book value, value added and replacement value - there is regular reference as well to the *weighing* of values, as in a cash book, a budget, a balance sheet and an income statement, all of which juxtapose various values with each other. In the concept of a *balance* sheet, the reference to a weighing of values is particularly strong. When an economist speaks of opportunity costs or alternative costs, the moment of weighing also stands out clearly: the same means of production can be employed in different ways to produce different outputs that need to be weighed against each other. Now, the examples thus given feature various analogies with other modalities. In connection with the model of the firm to be elaborated here, I want to proceed by considering systematically the anticipations and retrocipations that appear within the economic aspect.

Thus, in the concept of exchange *rates*, the numerical aspect surfaces: this concept involves units for *counting*. When we say that a product is of *great* or *little* value, the spatial structural moment in the economic modality is in evidence, while the kinematic mode of being appears in the concept of value *added*: the latter concept is full of movement. When economic theory speaks of the *intrinsic* value of, say, a gold coin, the reference is to the amount of precious metal: a retrocipation to the physical-chemical aspect. The same modality is involved in references in business economics to writing off the book value of capital goods, whereby *wear-and-tear*, among other things, is discounted. In the marxist labor theory of value, allusions to the concept of necessary labor are related to the satisfaction of the *vital* needs of the worker and his or her family<sup>47</sup>, a clear reference to the biotic modality. Without sense perception and the impulses that accompany it, goods and services have no practical value or *utility*: an example of a retrocipation that refers back to the sensitive mode of being.

The analytic moment in the weighing of values finds expression in the concept of cost-benefit *analysis*. The cultural-historical moment in the economic aspect may be observed not only in the taking into account of the *cultural-historical* value of a factory building, for example, but also in the *cultural* coloration and the *temporal conditionality* of the process of weighing values in general. The pipe holder on the wall in my mother's house reminds me of the grandfather after whom I am named and therefore has great *symbolic* value for me: it is *significant* to me. Thus that is an example of the linguistic structural moment in the weighing of values. The social

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W. van Drimmelen, *Meerwaarde en winst* (Nijmegen 1976) 32-33.

structural moment is manifest when an economist speaks of market or *exchange* values, as in barter and trade.

In the same manner, examples can be given of anticipations that point forward to the aesthetic, juridical, ethical and religious modalities. Is the process of weighing values not a question of an activity in which the various relevant aspects are balanced in a *harmonious* manner? And does the harmony in the balancing process not point to a clear *tension* between the different structural moments - retrocipatory and anticipatory - in the economic aspect? In the weighing of values, righteously done, an effort is made to do *justice* to all the different ways of being. Do not Justitia's *scales* already cast their shadow ahead here? Anticipation of the ethical and religious aspects is already implicit, moreover, in the term value itself. For do we not speak of *moral* and *religious values*?

The retrocipations and anticipations thus enumerated show the universality of the economic aspect in its own sphere.

## 2.5. The Economic Principle

What does all this mean for the economic principle? People are called upon, in all that they do or omit to do, to consider and weigh carefully the sacrificed and created values. Three observations are in order.

In the first place, the wonderful metaphor of *stewardship* is applicable here.<sup>48</sup> It contains not only a clear reference to the weighing of values but also the notion of our dealing with means that are not our property.

In the second place, it is in this context that I want to introduce the notion of *value surplus*. In all human acting it should be established whether there is a question of a surplus of value. I want to avoid here the concepts of surplus value and of value added. The term surplus value that plays such an important role in Marx has a different meaning, as does the term value added. The latter term refers to the value of the turnover minus the value of the raw materials and auxiliary resources used, while the concept of value surplus concerns the difference in value between the final product and that of *all* the means used, including therefore those that are often called production factors in economic science, labor among them.

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<sup>48</sup> B. Goudzwaard, *Kapitalisme en vooruitgang* (2d revised ed.) (Assen 1978) 255-56.

In the third place, the concepts of weighing values and of a value surplus involve more than the tension between means and ends. The choice of means and ends also falls under the assay of the economic principle. It bears repeating: economics is not purely a science of efficiency.

The economic principle for human actions can be defined concisely as *dealing as a steward with available valuable means in order to realize in a worthy way carefully chosen valuable ends so that a surplus of value is created*. To follow Geertsema, it is a matter of working out the *promise-command to be* in the economic law-sphere.<sup>49</sup> Obeying the economic principle means, in the most literal sense, economically *responsible* behavior.

This view of the economic aspect and the economic principle diverges somewhat, in the meantime, from the traditional approach in economic science. The natural sciences are clearly the envy of academic economics. This is especially evident when we look at those variables which are considered to be exogenous in economics: the circle of exogenous data (Dutch: *datakrans*).<sup>50</sup> An economic model ought ultimately to be able to proceed from independent variables in the circle of exogenous data to account for the dependent variables. The independent data are consumers' preferences, the available quantities and qualities of production factors, the juridical and social organization of society, and the state of technical knowledge. Even though it is recognized that there is no question of strict independence of the circle of exogenous data, the effort is made to imitate the model of the natural sciences to the extent possible.

In this manner the distinctive character of economic activity is denied: such activity is structured by normative principles for human behavior and not determined by natural laws. Economic relations are accordingly also *possible* relations, not *necessary* relations. Natural laws play a role in economic activity, of course, via the universality of the economic aspect in its own sphere, but they do not typify it. In the use of the circle of exogenous data there is even a danger of denying an independent economic aspect. For is economic action not reduced to other aspects such as the

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<sup>49</sup> H. G. Geertsema, *Het menselijk karakter van ons kennen*, Verantwoording 6 (Amsterdam 1992).

See also H. G. Geertsema, 'Homo respondens: On the Historical Nature of Human Reason', *Philosophia Reformata* 58 (1993) 120-52.

<sup>50</sup> A. Heertje, *De kern van de economie*, Part 1 (5th revised ed.) (Leiden 1970) 8-10.

physical-chemical (production technique), the sensitive (preferences) and the social (societal order) modalities? Kee too warns against such a reduction.<sup>51</sup>

The fiction also arises rather easily that the circle of exogenous data would not fall under the assay of the economic principle. In the case of the scale of needs of consumers, this is manifest in the notion of the sovereignty of the consumer: the customer is king. Yet this same customer is buried, in the meantime, by an avalanche of advertising. Moreover, accepting the state of technological knowledge as simply given can result in an economy in which everything that is technologically possible is considered mandatory. Preferences and technological possibilities ought, however, to be fully involved in the weighing of values. Not all needs are equally basic, and there are also perverted desires. Nor is every technological option equally worthwhile.<sup>52</sup>

In summary it can be stated that a natural science methodology *sui generis* is not suited to the study of the economic aspect. Such a methodology leads all too easily to shutting the economic modality up in the earlier modes of being that are its substratum, while in fact what is intended is its disclosure in the direction of the later aspects, such as the pistic or faith aspect.

I return to the definition of the economic principle. Stewardship has everything to do with the weighing of values. In the preceding section we observed that this weighing implies value assessment. In the modern economy money is commonly used as the unit of account for this purpose. Indeed, the use of money makes it easier not only to engage in exchange but also to establish the magnitude of value. Yet do market prices guarantee an adequate measurement of value? It has become clear in the course of time that a market price does not always mean a *justum pretium*.

As a meter of societal value the market price does not always coincide with the subjective scale of values of the parties involved: economic science, for example, speaks of the consumers' surplus and the producers' surplus, meaning that in many cases consumers or producers would have been willing to purchase or sell a product at a higher or lower price, respectively. A market price evidently forms something of a largest common denominator of individual value assessments.

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<sup>51</sup> Kee, *Prijzen en produktie*, 20-21.

<sup>52</sup> After completing this passage I came across a similar critique of the use of the circle of exogenous data in B. Goudzwaard and H. M. de Lange, *Genoeg van te veel, Genoeg van te weinig* (3d revised and enlarged ed.) (Baarn 1991) 46-56. They refer to the Kantian background of the use of the circle of exogenous data.



Moreover, there are some objections to be raised against the use of market prices as a meter of *societal* value. Does a market price do justice to all the relevant aspects of valuation? Although a market price is qualified by the economic aspect, it remains a fact that via the universality of the economic aspect in its own sphere, all the remaining modal aspects are represented as structural moments within this modality. A market price arises within a certain economic order having a specific division of income and capital and particular political power relations. It is a question to what extent these circumstances are always in agreement with various social and moral normative principles, to mention just two other law-spheres. By using the circle of exogenous data, an economist can all too easily lose sight of considerations of this sort. It is thus no accident that price theory features so-called *external* effects.

To my mind it would be much more illuminating to speak here of *externalized* effects: namely, one chooses, consciously or unconsciously, not to take into *account* in his behavior its effects on the natural or the social environment. In the process, these influences are wrongfully located beyond human responsibility in the family, the firm, or some other societal structure. It simply is not the case that the market cannot take such matters into account; it is sooner the case that people as participants in the market fail at certain points to take into account the possible societal effects of their behavior. It is wrong to hide behind the market as an anonymous technical ordering device. The free market economy, the specific way it is shaped and people's behaviors in it are matters of human choice and responsibility.

Apart from the objections to the use of market prices, it is a question whether assessment in quantitative terms in general can afford solace. The projection, legitimate in itself, from the economic aspect onto the numerical aspect can never completely cover the process of weighing values. Not only would there then be no question of an independent economic mode of being, but there are also *countless*(!) qualitative considerations that arise from the other modalities as well, none of them fully comprehensible in a number. Here we touch upon a sensitive point for practitioners of economic science. Is not too much emphasis put upon the adage (following again the example of the natural sciences): measuring is knowing (Dutch: *meten is weten*)?

The process of weighing values might better be couched more often in terms of better and worse. For example: more room could be made in a company's annual report for qualitative considerations. Perhaps it would even be better to view the balance sheet and the income statement as elucidations of a mainly qualitative annual report!

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that there are some things that cannot easily be expressed in terms of a market price: environmental goods, collective goods such as defence, but also culturally important goods such as a minority language. The valuation of such things generally occurs via collective decision making processes.

Striving for a value surplus, in the meantime, typifies the production of goods and services. Production, after all, literally involves *bringing forth*: its aim is to get a step further. That is the moment of truth in the definition of the meaning kernel of the economic aspect in Van Niekerk Fourie: managing a production process. At the same time, the economic principle provides a deep insight into the nature of increasing production and economic growth: these concepts acquire profound significance when we understand that the weighing of values is directed towards real societal advancement.

What does all this mean for the development of a company? For the economic principle is the *primus inter pares* of the normative principles for human behavior in firms.

## 2.6. Company Development: Production or Reduction?

Making use of what has been said till now, one can define an enterprise as follows. A *company is a societal structure in which one or more people ought to strive to produce a value surplus*. Goudzwaard speaks in this connection not of a value surplus but of "*net fruitfulness for society*".<sup>53</sup>

What does this definition mean for the development of a company? At stake is the process of positivizing the economic principle on the law side of the economic aspect. Care must be taken not only to avoid being closed up in the substratum of the earlier aspects (reduction!) but also to strive for disclosure in the direction of the later modalities. In connection with the latter, the pistic modality plays a crucial role. Not every enterprise can be called a successful attempt to positivize the economic principle. The touchstone remains the contribution to a real value surplus.

Given this basis, a number of essential questions can be put to management. Which company goals are important? How are these realized? How are people treated? What is the attitude towards technological renewal? Is it considered important that the techniques and technologies employed be consistent with human dignity? Is concern for the natural environment a priority? Are laws and regulations respected? Is consideration given to the nature and quality of the company's products? What does management think of sponsoring societal organizations? In short, what is the company leadership's concept of value?

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<sup>53</sup> Goudzwaard, *Kapitalisme*, 256 (italics: Goudzwaard).

On the basis of Dooyeweerd's ontology a case is made for a multidimensional concept of value. Depending on circumstances, this concept can be worked out in different ways. The matter is one of giving form, after all, according to a free design, which suggests the possibility of cultural diversity. Naturally, there is an abiding critical reference available in the economic principle.

This critical reference also applies to the personal goals of the firm's leaders. A manager who is solely interested - cost what it may - in attaining preferred social status or a high income or even advancement of the use of a minority language in a company cannot lead the enterprise towards its economic destination. Personal goals have their place, but they may never conflict with the economic destination of a company.

I want to consider for a moment the profit motive that plays such a significant role in economic theory and practice. However affinitive the terms profit and value surplus may be, they may never be regarded as synonymous. As we have seen, the goal of making money is strongly relativized. It may be financially profitable, for example, to press poor girls from the Philippines into virtual slavery in Dutch brothels, but that certainly does not create a value surplus.

This does not mean that the financial aspect of the value surplus is unimportant. In the first place, the economic principle for a company means avoiding financial loss in the long run, on pain of the collapse of this societal structure. In the second place, profit is a justifiable goal for a number of reasons. Profit can be used to strengthen the company's own resources so that it can survive lean times. It is also legitimate that shareholders be rewarded for risks taken. Last but not least, profits can be used to renew the company in many ways. Meanwhile, the financial side of the value surplus can be affected by civil authorities via charges and subsidies.

## **2.7. Management and Bilingualism: a Heuristic Analysis**

What do the bilingual situation and language policy mean in West European minority language regions for the efforts of firms established there to create a value surplus? Here the company framework developed above can be used as a heuristic scheme. Because of the fact that this article forms the basis for in-depth interviews with managers of Frisian firms, I focus on questions about the ways favored by management for positivizing the economic principle in a minority language region. Here and there I formulate a tentative answer, particularly for the situation in Fryslân.

An important question is that of whether in connection with the bilingual situation managers weigh values in a *considered* way. Language policy can be a *sensitive* issue for managers. Is their cost-benefit analysis not too often made *impulsively* without their having a clear picture of bilingual circumstances in the company, and their consequences? After all, the analytical aspect follows directly upon the sensitive aspect. On what data and arguments is the weighing based? I suspect that entrepreneurs in Fryslân think very little in a systematic way about the position of Frisian in their companies. I also have the impression that in general in Fryslân there is greater awareness of the possible negative facets of the bilingual situation than there is of its potential benefits.<sup>54</sup>

Here the relevance of bilingualism for the individual company also plays a role. The numerical aspect is manifest here. In a company is there really a question of a significant degree of bilingualism, both within the enterprise and in the market? This is closely connected with the spatial modality. Do the labor market district and the marketing area coincide with the minority language region? It goes without saying that the bilingual situation receives attention first in companies with a significant number of employees and/or customers from the minority language group. Furthermore, how intensively is a firm affected by the consequences of the language policy? Finally, it is questionable whether the bilingual situation and language policy play a role of any prominence in the process of weighing values even where an individual company is clearly confronted with bilingualism internally and externally.<sup>55</sup> Here the kinematic aspect could play a role. In the kinematic structural moment movement is manifest within the economic modality as this is expressed in, for example, the business cycle and the product life cycle. Depending on the phase of these cycles, the urgency of devoting attention to relations with customers or employees can vary. Given an ample labor market and a product at the peak of its life cycle, considering their interests may seem less urgent than during hard times.

We just alluded to *relations* with customers and employees. The social modality is important for our theme: for in the order of aspects it is located between the linguistic and the economic modes of being. This can be interpreted as follows. In and round about a company social relations play an important role. Exchange takes place in the market, and within a company people cooperate. Such social intercourse does not occur without communication, which requires a system of symbols or a language. Differences in systems of symbols complicate running an enterprise. In West European minority language regions, one must often choose between the regional and the

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<sup>54</sup> See on this point P. H. Pellenbarg, *Identiteit, imago en economische ontwikkeling van regio's* (Groningen 1991) 20-21.

<sup>55</sup> A. P. van Langevelde and H. J. M. Löwik, *Wurket it Frysk?* (Leeuwarden 1985).

national language. Which language does management think contributes the most to creating a value surplus? How does the market react to it, and how is it regarded within the company? For the language of choice within the company may very well differ from the one used externally.

The company name plays a special role in the communication of firms with the external world. Often associated with a nonverbal logo, it evokes a particular image. From my own research I know that in Fryslân some firms choose a Frisian company name. Why do they do so, and what has been the experience of these companies in and beyond the minority language region?

Besides being a means of communication, the minority language can also be a final product, as in the case of minority language literature and music. Here the aesthetic way of being surfaces. Is there after all a question of an indigenous literature and musical tradition of any significance in the region? If so, there could be an attractive market for companies - not necessarily for firms located in the minority language region itself, of course. From some exploratory fieldwork in Fryslân I have gained the impression that one ought not to expect too much of the financial profitability of Frisian-language books. Subsidies remain important.

Yet the role of the minority language as a means of communication continues to be crucial. How high do company leaders estimate the communications value of this language to be? Management have in hand an important part of the economic power whereby they can shape the firm according to a free concept: the cultural-historical aspect. In the case of a company, that concept is a *value* concept that underlies the process of weighing values. Here the pistic or faith aspect, given its leading role, is of great importance in the process of disclosure.

For discussions with management, this is an important point to ponder. What is the deepest spiritual orientation of the management? What personal goals have been informed by that orientation? What does this all mean for the management's concept of value and for company goals and objectives based on such a concept? How important is the pursuit of financial profits? In the management's eyes does the minority language have general societal value and, if so, of what does that consist? Does a company have to respect it as it does, for example, the value of nature?<sup>56</sup> What could such respect mean for running a company? Or does this respect need to find expression only in sponsoring, such that consideration for the minority language is

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<sup>56</sup> For an analogy between the value of the natural environment and that of a language, see F. Grin, 'Minority Language Promotion: On the Practical Usefulness of Economic Theory', in Dafis, *Economic Development*, 38.

primarily an external affair? I suspect that the value concept of many entrepreneurs, also in West European minority language regions, is fairly traditional in tone in the sense that, from a Dooyeweerdian perspective, it exhibits dubious polarities between what is "economically possible", on the one hand, and "socially and environmentally desirable", on the other. I believe, furthermore, that this situation damages the position of minority languages.

Are there perhaps spiritual differences between managers that have to do with differences in their language backgrounds?<sup>57</sup> What does this mean for the value concept in general and for the valuation of the minority language in particular? Besides the faith aspect, the moral and juridical aspects are important in the process of disclosure of the economic mode of being.

Hoogland calls the moral modality the aspect of *caring*.<sup>58</sup> What priority does the company leadership give to care for its employees? Can the minority language be valuable in management-labor relations, for example, or in contacts between the company doctor or social worker, respectively, and employees?<sup>59</sup> My hypothesis is that virtually no attention is devoted today to the possible utility of the use of a minority language in corporate care.

How well does the language policy of civil authorities fit the value concept of a company? What do managers favor in this regard? This juridical aspect points, moreover, to a possible need for a language policy in a company itself. Does such a policy exist?<sup>60</sup> How much freedom does the employer give employees to use their mother tongue?

Now, besides these "opening" aspects, there are also foundational modalities that are of importance for the economic and linguistic modes of being. Several have already been mentioned.

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<sup>57</sup> As in Wales, according to D. Morris, 'The Effect of Economic Changes on Gwynedd Society', in L. Dafis (ed.), *The Lesser Used Languages: Assimilating Newcomers* (Carmarthen 1992) 153, 155.

<sup>58</sup> J. Hoogland, 'Vervuld van zorg', *Beweging* 60 (1996) 16-19.

<sup>59</sup> See H. Hoog, *Om reden fan sûnens*, Berierapport 7 (Ljouwert 1993) 52-53.

<sup>60</sup> See on this point for Friesland D. Gorter, G. H. Jelsma, P. H. van der Plank and K. de Vos, *Taal yn Fryslân* (Ljouwert 1984) 373. An extensive English-language summary of this book is available: *Language in Friesland* (Leeuwarden 1988).

The linguistic aspect, the nucleus of which is symbolic meaning, plays an essential role. Does management experience the minority language as a relatively *clear* company language (the analytic moment)? Is its lexicon sufficiently rich? Are employees prepared to incorporate newly developed terminology into the minority language (the sensitive aspect)? Are there relevant differences between the spoken and the written language? Within the firm could the minority language be an outstanding means of *verbal* communication, for example, with the national language enjoying preference for *written* use?

The usefulness of the minority language in a firm will undoubtedly depend importantly on the nature of the firm's economic activity. Frisian, for example, would seem to be more useful as the jargon of the agricultural sector and of businesses engaged in related processing, delivery and services than as the terminology of high-tech industries. Naturally, it is possible to develop new Frisian words. One may doubt, however, that employees will always be prepared to incorporate such terms into their vocabulary.

The sensitive aspect came up earlier. What *impulses* are evoked by the presence of two languages or language groups in a company? Does that situation generate positive or negative tensions? Does respect by management for the mother tongue of the minority language group have positive consequences for the motivation of the personnel concerned? In Quebec respect for French is found to be important: it can enhance loyalty to the company.<sup>61</sup> The sensitive modality can be equally important in connection with the consequences of language policy. Does the policy create strong emotions? Why? Again, I am compelled to observe that in Fryslân there seems to be greater sensitivity to the negative than to the positive tensions produced by bilingualism and language policy in the region.

In doing empirical research it is impossible to ignore the dynamics in the field of investigation. In this regard it is fruitful to recall that Dooyeweerd's modalities are *temporal* aspects: this helps prevent static thinking. For example, language policy can change. The economy becomes increasingly international. What does this mean for the position of the regional language in companies? The growing unity of Europe and expansion of the European Union may be fraught with farreaching consequences.<sup>62</sup> In connection with these dynamics, one may consider the mutual influences of the

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<sup>61</sup> Office de la Langue Française, *Etude*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> F. Grin, 'European Economic Integration and the Fate of Lesser Used Languages', *Language Problems and Language Planning* 17 (1993) 101-16.

minority and majority languages on each other. Frisian, for example, looks more and more like Dutch.<sup>63</sup>

Technological developments also form an important dynamic element (the physical-chemical aspect). For our theme developments in the field of communications technologies are particularly noteworthy. There will probably be consequences for the position of the minority language especially where written communications supersede verbal ones, as in the case of face-to-face and telephone contacts being replaced by fax, e-mail and the internet. For the minority language occupies a much stronger position in the verbal than in the written segment.

The cultural-historical aspect is the dynamic aspect *par excellence*. It is directly foundational to the linguistic aspect. This suggests a close relationship between language and culture. This connection is clearly manifest in the literature of cultural anthropology.<sup>64</sup> Is this relationship relevant for West European minority language regions? Do managers find that the minority language group displays a work culture divergent from the national one? Heyboer reports widespread satisfaction with the motivation of employees in Fryslân.<sup>65</sup> Is this indicative of a connection between the minority language and the regional culture? Is this relationship relevant with respect to the managers themselves: are there differences of entrepreneurial approach that would be traceable to the language background?<sup>66</sup>

Managers who have worked in several locations in the country can be asked about their experiences with bilingualism. Does bilingualism really make any difference for running a company? Does it matter whether the issue is one of dialect rather than of regional language? Or are differences traceable to language policy? In this respect, what is the attitude of colleagues located outside the minority language region?

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<sup>63</sup> See for example G. J. de Haan, *Meertaligheid in Friesland* (Dordrecht 1992).

<sup>64</sup> See on this point D. Hymes (ed.), *Language in Culture and Society* (2d ed.) (New York 1971).

<sup>65</sup> C. L. Heyboer, *Ontwikkelingsmogelijkheden voor bedrijven in Friesland* (Leeuwarden 1982) 19, 30, 35.

<sup>66</sup> See for Wales A. Price (ed.), *Quiet Revolution?* (Aberystwyth 1994) .



## 2.8. Evaluation

The company framework developed in this paper is clearly helpful in formulating questions for empirical research. Yet that does not exhaust this framework's possibilities. It can also prove useful in connection with comparative studies between different West European minority language areas. Moreover, on the basis of the economic principle, thought can be given to its good positivization in the economic policy in the regions in question. Perhaps the bilingual situation can serve as a stimulus to regional authorities to foster an economic development more in harmony with the regional culture, in which the minority language plays so salient a role. Then bilingualism would form a point of profit in the economic development of West European minority language regions.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> After I had finished writing this article R. van Woudenberg (ed.), *Kennis en werkelijkheid* (Amsterdam and Kampen 1996) became available. I believe my article contains take-off points for resolving some of the important issues Kee mentions in his contribution to this book. In this regard my definition of the meaning kernel of the economic modality is crucial. But it would go beyond the scope of this publication to expand upon that here.